

A DEMONSTRATION OF EDUCATIONAL CRAFT: AN OUTDOOR
EDUCATOR'S AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

By

James Borland, BA, BEd.

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Supervisor: Dr. Maureen Connolly

Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Brock University

St. Catharines, Ontario

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Abstract

Ellis (2004) argues that autoethnography is a methodology that begins with the researcher as the site of study. Employing a qualitative storytelling structure shows, instead of tells. As the audience reads, they are encouraged to relate the research to their experiences, provoking reflective knowledge development. As an outdoor educator, I began to question the nature of my craft and how it was being shaped by my personal educational philosophy. So, drawing on a reflective journal I kept while employed as an outdoor educator in 2007, three outdoor educators published narratives, and a historical review of newspaper articles about Ontario-based outdoor education, conducted an autoethnographic inquiry and built a fictional story about my craft. I exposed five faultlines or areas of ideological tension, shaping my views about outdoor education and my craft.

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Preface

Ellis (2004) argues that autoethnography is a methodology that begins with the researcher as the site of study. Employing a qualitative storytelling structure shows as well as tells, building inquiry by eliciting a relationship between the audience and the research. As the audience reads the research, they generalize it to their experiences, provoking reflection and spurring knowledge development. As an outdoor educator, I began to question the nature of my craft and how it was being shaped by my personal educational philosophy. So, I decided to conduct an autoethnographic inquiry to explore three questions: *how does what I do as an outdoor educator shape my educational philosophy? What influences drive my actions in the field? and How can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioners' craft?*

Just like Sharp (1947) and Smith (1970), I argue that outdoor education is a teaching methodology that uses native materials to teach what is best learned outdoors. Craft is the creative synergy an educator's personal educational philosophy and actions complete to shape his practice. An educational philosophy is an educator's statement of beliefs used to guide his craft. As George Donaldson (1950) argues there are times in a professional's career when he needs to take a mental stock of his craft, and consider the path he wants his craft to take in the future. So, drawing on a reflective journal I kept while employed as an outdoor educator in 2007, published narratives of three other outdoor educators, and a historical review of newspaper articles about Ontario-based outdoor education, I built a fictional story about my craft. Composing characters, I created an academic discussion between four outdoor educators sharing stories around a campfire at an outdoor education research conference. Using fictional writing as a tool to

critique the stories I created about my practice, I exposed five faultlines shaping my views about outdoor education and the nature of my craft.

Faultlines are areas of social tension between groups that reflect the potential for a shift in the social division of power (Bone, 2005). Through my research, I identified five narratives currently shaping how social power is defined in the field of outdoor education: (a) centre-based/people-based faultline, (b) environmental faultline, (c) commercial/educational faultline, (d) aesthetic adventure/peak adventure faultline, and (e) the universal story/personal story faultline. These faultlines explore central issues related to how current practical and academic foundations in outdoor education are being defined and implemented. Writing a fictional dialogue to explore the five faultlines, this thesis demonstrates how reflective practice as a form of professional practice can assist practitioners (educators and researchers alike) in exposing faultlines in their craft. Through this process, practitioners can reconsider how their personal educational philosophy guides their practice.

Chapter One: Introduction

Once in a while, when the campers are asleep and the fire in the cabin fireplace burns low, there comes a time for mental stock-taking – a review of the kind of camp I want to run and a critical look at the one I am running. Long ago I learned that I must not just look at the woods and envision a program of educational camping; it goes much deeper than that. (Donaldson, 1950, p. 529)

Donaldson wrote this in 1950. As a pioneer of the American outdoor education and camping education movement, understanding and reflecting on his personal educational philosophy was obviously as important for guiding his practice, as it is for mine. The first time I read this quote by Donaldson, I began asking myself: *What do I do as an outdoor educator? What drives my actions in the field? What influences me? As an outdoor educator, what is my educational philosophy? How can I improve my craft?*

How can reflective practice as a form of research improve practitioners' understanding of their craft? A personal educational philosophy is exactly that, a personal plan based on an educator's set of ideas and beliefs about education that guides his professional behaviour (Levin, Nolan, Kerr, & Elliott, 2005; Parkay, Hardcastle Stanford, Vallianicourt, & Stephens, 2005). It requires educators to reflect on their practice and how they perform their craft (Russell, 2006; Whitehead, 1989, 2000). When I refer to educator's practice as a craft, I am referring to what Tregust and Harrison (1999) argue is the sense that, "expert teachers use artistic styles and creative formats within which they develop their explanations, arguments and questions" (p. 28) as well as

other aspects of their practice. An educator's craft is guided by his educational philosophy. This type of philosophy cannot be learned by rote, instead, is learned and developed through a professional's practical experiences. It "represents the way in which the worker assigns internal meaning and hence governs her/his actions" (Nivala, 2002, p. 19). According to Carol (1996), "A personal educational philosophy can be stated in about one page and should include the roles of the instructor, setting, and student in the teaching learning process" (p. 12). Caspell (2006) argues that when an outdoor educator's educational philosophy is not in line with the program he runs, maybe it is time to rethink how he operates his program.

This is what Donaldson (1950) meant when he wrote, "there comes a time for mental-stock taking – a review of the kind of camp I want to run and a critical look at the one I'm running" (p. 529). Donaldson follows these comments with a description of how he feels the mechanized world has deprived children of opportunities to interact with nature, and goes on to outline 11 principles he envisions about, "the kind of camp I'd like to operate" (p. 530). Higgins and Nicol (2002) argue that reflective professional practice is central to an outdoor educator's craft because it provides an opportunity for educators to reflect on their actions and ensure they are achieving their stated aims. Andrews (2003) emphasizes this same point arguing in his book, *Accountability in Outdoor Education*, "you cannot defend something unless your viewpoint is clear and consistent. A philosophy is a values system that guides behaviour. Therefore a philosophy of outdoor education directs your actions when you are designing outdoor programs" (p. 14). Goodman and Knapp (1981) recognize that today most practitioners can describe a personal philosophy about their practice. Only, "the 'rub' comes when we ask these

people to elaborate beyond glib expressions. When we ask them to clarify their goals, guiding principles, program or curriculum focus, and beliefs, they become less verbal and more unsure” (p. 25). This is a concern of mine because, as Novak (2002) states, it is important for educators to be able to describe and justify the actions they perform in practice.

Andrews (2003) argues that many outdoor educators have begun, “to give undue emphasis to certain aspects of their program such as outdoor recreation, the development of social skills, and group dynamics” (p. 2). This is supported by Henderson (2007) who argues,

I am of the view that nature in North American outdoor education and recreation is all-too-easily lost in the mania of skill development, personal growth and technological conveniences. Nature becomes a backdrop, perhaps even a sparring partner to test one’s skill and resources. (p. 4)

This is supported by Brookes (1994) who addressed this same point over a decade earlier. Loynes (1998) extends this argument, indicating the core values of outdoor education that involve: (a) making connections between people, (b) communities, and (c) the environment . . . have been replaced. Only certain aspects of outdoor education, such as outdoor pursuits which “are activities done in areas remote from the amenities of telephone, emergency help, and urban comforts” (Ford, 1986, p. 7) are being narrowly focused on by practitioners and the public. In *Outdoor Education: Authentic Learning in the Context of Landscapes* published with support from the European Union, Higgins and Nicol (2002) argue that:

The trend in outdoor education is towards the provision of short duration, high excitement experiences . . . such activities rarely involve real risk, but often emphasize apparent risk. It seems disingenuous to develop a range of such activities which appear to be risky, and argue that they have some unspecified educational benefits, when they are at least giving participants a false impression of hazard and risk. (p. 9)

Even more disconcerting is that with the advent of technology, such as artificial recreation environments, outdoor education programs do not necessarily even have to focus on these types of extended outdoor pursuits-based programs. Artificial environments, such as challenge courses (also called ropes courses) which are essentially large playgrounds people climb using rock climbing gear (Haras, Bunting, & Witt, 2006), allow consumers the opportunity to engage in equally thrilling experiences without having to travel far distances outside of urban environments (Forester & Ross, 2005). Loynes (2007) argues that the practitioners who provide these types of activities treat these experiences as marketable products rather than educational experiences. Reminiscing about a conversation he had with one challenge course provider, Loynes (2007) states, “One provider confided that they [sic] could sell any programme provided it was a two day ropes course experience” (p. 261). What is interesting to note is that this philosophy of outdoor education operates in direct opposition to the views of its foundational philosophers, such as Goodale (1972), who argues “The outdoors can and should communicate the worth of all living things and the essential interdependence of all resources for life” (p. 4). At the first international conference of the Council of Ontario

Educators of Ontario (C.O.E.O.) in 1972, the keynote speaker, Goodale, foreshadowed the arguments of authors like Loynes stating,

To make matters worse, those who choose careers in the mechanical and manipulative technological areas are frequently those whose character and personality types tend toward the authoritarian. They are most comfortable with cool, subjective, rational, and precisely specifiable tasks. And that is the type that is most inimical to the future of man. (p. 4)

Loynes (1998) argues this narrowed view of outdoor education is being driven by the commercial appeal these types of activities attract and the wealth these activities generate. This point is supported by Holyfield, Jonas, and Zajicek (2005) who make the same argument in their investigation of the white water rafting industry. Brookes (1993) argues that many businesses today now practice a form of shallow outdoor education where they vaguely link the terms *outdoor* and *education* to their programs as *outdoor education*. For example, Brookes (1993) argues, “Perhaps my little tourist operation would attract more school businesses if I devised a handout about the aboriginal paintings on the abseiling wall, and called my operation *Brookesie’s outdoor education tours* [italics added] instead of the previous name *Brookesie’s bush bashes* [italics added]” (p. 9). Brookes (1993) argues that these are not wicked uses of the term *outdoor education*, but that these discursive uses have exaggerated the view of what is outdoor education.

It is important to note that there are some outdoor education programs that are still consistent with the philosophical roots of outdoor education. Some of these types of programs are illustrated in C.O.E.O.’s recent Research Summary *Reconnecting Children Through Outdoor Education* which argues that outdoor education,

has many forms and takes place in a variety of local and remote, urban and wilderness settings – field centres, canoe trips, high school interdisciplinary programs, private camps, school accredited Outward Bound courses, public agencies such as the YMCA, school ground greening projects and others” and, “fits seamlessly into a wide variety of school curricula, including science and numerous ecosystem field studies; guided walks and exercises in historical neighbourhoods; math (numeracy) – measurements of plant growth; geography – GPS mapping; social studies – local naturalization projects; physical education – cross country skiing; literacy – written / verbal reflections elicited from students regarding their outdoor education experiences. (Foster & Linney, 2007, p. 9).

However, this overemphasis on outdoor pursuit-based programs and their artificial counterparts within the dominant conception of outdoor education within Ontario, “has led to a minimization of other program components” (Andrews, 2003, p. 2-3) and turned many outdoor education programs into outdoor recreation providers. I argue that this focus is changing not only the public perceptions of what outdoor education is and does, but what practitioners and academics alike view as outdoor education and the potential it can accomplish.

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Statement of the Problem

For me, outdoor education is a really simple concept. As Henly and Peavy (2006) describe: “for a person to truly connect and develop a deep appreciation for nature they [sic] must be immersed in the outdoors. There is no substitute for direct experience” (p. 6). *“That which can best be learned inside the classroom should be learned there; and*

that which can best be learned through direct experience outside the classroom, in contact with native materials and life situations, should there be learned” (Sharp, 1947, p. 43). Through these two definitions, I view outdoor education, as Smith (1970) describes, as learning in and for the outdoors. Through this lens, I side with Goodman and Knapp (1981), who argue “The learning environment becomes forests, field, water courses, a city block, a cemetery, or a mountain top. The use of each ecosystem should be maximized, because each is a prime opportunity for firsthand learning” (p. 25). This includes teaching people not only about the environment, but about themselves and their interactions in it (Priest, 1999a).

This is because, in its broadest terms as Ford (1986) defines, outdoor education educates people about the interrelationships between human beings “and the natural resources upon which societies depend, with the goal of stewardship in mind” (p. 4).

Knapp (1999) argues that this notion of stewardship is a,

land ethic represented by people who believe humans should manage the land to benefit people *and* nonhuman nature. It is generally characterized by strong beliefs about taking care of the land and using it to satisfy human needs and wants. (p. 54)

Knapp (1999) argues further that, “The term *natural resource* implies nature is a commodity to preserve for use in various forms of recreation such as hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, and wildlife watching” (p. 55). However, for me, when I discuss this concept of stewardship and natural resources, I am not speaking from the point of view that the human species is the highest expression of creation or that the environment should be thought of only as a commodity for human use (Bowers, 1993). Instead, I side

with Suzuki (2003a) who argues that people “are one species among perhaps 10 to 30 million other species, on whom we are ultimately dependant for our well-being” (p. 159).

As multi-sensory animals we understand the world through sight, sound, taste, smell and touch. We also relate to events in ways which are intellectual, physical, emotional, aesthetic and spiritual. Whilst it may be possible to experience an event through a single sense and know it in a single way . . . this is not the norm.

(Higgins & Nicol, 2002, p. 8)

Therefore, our environments should be respected and cared for.

In agreement with Ayers and Speed (1994), I argue that outdoor education should educate the public about the “wise use and responsible care for our environment” (p. 6.1). This is important because most people today “live in large cities, our relationship to nature is less obvious” (Suzuki, 2003, p. 158a). Therefore, the “development of a land ethic that commands us to treat the land and all its resources with respect at all times and on all occasions” (Ford, 1986, p. 8) allows humanity the opportunity to rediscover our humility and place, “in the world so that we and the rest of life can continue to flourish” (Suzuki, 2003a, p. 159). This requires teaching people to perceive their interrelationships to natural resources, other people, and the customs of their societies. Through an understanding of basic ecological, sociological, and cultural principles, people can begin to develop or redevelop an ethic of environmental stewardship. This is important because the goal of promoting stewardship of natural environments is crucial as it is “most often left out in contemporary classroom education” (Henly & Peavy, 2006, p. 6).

As an outdoor educator, the outdoors is my classroom where I teach people about their relationships to the natural environment, themselves, and other people through

activities such as track identification, outdoor cooking, camping, and challenge course programs (Ambry, 1980; Andrews, 2003; Brookes, 2002; Carlson, 1980; Priest, 1999a). I teach people to perceive the outdoors around them. I provide people an opportunity to use their senses to practice their interpretive skills, “to see, to hear, and to gain an understanding of the environment around oneself” (Ambry, p. 51). One way I do this is through play (Loynes, 2004).

Play promotes creativity (Woolfolk, Winnie, & Perry, 2006) and this applies to children and adults. However, much of the literature focusing on play currently published focuses on child’s play (Apter, 1991). However, looking beyond this issue as a learning medium, play provides content to, “be discovered by the learner before it can be internalized” (Christie, 2001, p. 357). This is because play provides a safe venue for people to use their imagination to practice and test the social rules of a person’s culture before following or breaking those rules outside of play (Vygotsky, 1978).

This supports Heerwagen and Orians (2002) argument that outdoor play amongst children teaches socialization skills, which is also supported by Loynes (2004).

“Outdoor play, as many researchers have pointed out, may be especially valuable because it integrates cognitive, emotional, and social behaviors (Heerwagen & Orians, p. 55).

Rivkin (2006) argues that outdoor play provides opportunities for children to develop a mental map of their outdoor world which contributes to developing independence from adults, fosters healthy physical development, and develops an ethic of environmental stewardship. Play in natural places allows children to develop basic bush and survival skills which connect children with the legacy of our hunting and gathering past (Pyle,

2002). I argue that these same factors apply to adolescents and adults. Play provides a way for people to develop and socially contextualize their identities (Kjølørød, 2003).

Therefore, as an outdoor educator, this does not mean I teach people broad universal understandings drawn strictly from books and scholarly literature (Brookes, 1994). Though I do teach people within the classroom (using books and scholarly literature), I also take people outdoors to participate in ecological and adventurous activities like track identification and challenge course programs. I do not focus strictly on teaching skills about how to navigate through the outdoors (Brookes, 1994). In fact, Andrews (2003), Brookes (1994), and Preston (2004) all argue that this type of approach only teaches people how to move through the outdoors, instead of being able to perceive, interpret, appreciate, and develop a deeper understanding of natural environments.

Outdoor education programs that solely promote the development of outdoor skills contextualize people's identities through play as members of a materialistic culture that collect thrills (Kjølørød, 2003). In this way, people's identities begin to be contextualized through their collections. The recognition that they have participated in these activities becomes more important to their social status than the activity itself (Holyfield et al., 2005). Through this process, experience becomes a commodity to be bought. Instead of educating people about the outdoors, education becomes something to be packaged and sold to meet the desires of a practitioner's clientele (Loynes, 1998). Learning through play, then, loses its value as practitioners gain power over clients in the pursuit of wealth, or, as Priest (1999a) describes, the pursuit of educating people about their relationships to themselves, each other, and the environment. As an outdoor educator, I feel this is a central problem facing outdoor education these days, especially

the sector of outdoor education I have the most experience in: outdoor education centres and summer camps.

As an outdoor educator, I agree with Priest (1999a) that the emphasis in my area of outdoor education is to educate the public about their relationships to the environment, to each other, and themselves, though I argue that the current state of outdoor education has shifted its paradigm and no longer focuses on teaching people about these issues. Many outdoor educators, including myself, agree with Andrews (2003) who argues that outdoor education is no longer about developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes that cannot be developed indoors. Its focus has changed and the lifeskills that are now being sold are how to use the outdoors as a natural resource for recreation. The forms of recreation that are being promoted are predominantly high-intensity undertakings, "such as cross-country backpacking; canoeing; cross country skiing; wilderness camping; rock climbing; orienteering" (Andrews, p. 12); the type of activities most members of the general public define as outdoor recreation.

These outdoor recreation activities or outdoor pursuits require people to buy expensive specialized equipment to participate in these activities (Cuthbertson, Socha & Potter, 2004), or, at the very least, buy experiences from those who sell them (Bowers, 2006; Holyfield et al., 2005). Grimwood (2006) argues these activities are an important way Ontario-based outdoor centres and camps now generate additional income to enable them to support all of their services. He argues that the provision of these activities is important after the last decade when several fiscal constraints were imposed on Ontario's school boards and several boards cut funding to outdoor education programs, closing down a large number of school board supported field centres (Linney, 1994;

Moris, 2001; Primavesi, 1994; Shaw, 1994; Suzuki, 2001; Williamson, 1994). Though I argue that this explanation is more of an excuse to support current practices, as an outdoor educator I do agree that promoting a sense of adventure is an important aspect of outdoor education. Just as Priest (1999a) states, it is only half of the equation. Instead of placing blame on current practices, I argue, as Novak (2002) does, that it is better to look forward from our past to challenge and change practice. This is because, as Crawford (2007) argues, as an outdoor educator I determine what defines my practice.

Like Andrews (2003) and Priest (1999a) argue, for outdoor education to be truly effective, it must teach people not only as Bunting (2006) describes, how to live and travel in the outdoors, but also to educate people about their connections to the natural environment, especially on a local scale (Brookes, 2002). This ensures that the public develops an understanding of their ecological role as part of these environments (Andrews, 2003). It prepares people, "to handle, as informed and intelligent citizens, the environmental problems that lie ahead if they are to care for, use, and enjoy our battered planet" (Carlson, 1980, p. ix). This is important because, as Abram (1996) argues, the outdoors surrounds us at all times. It is a place people go to participate in leisure activities during their leisure time.

We need to teach young people how to spend their leisure time in the outdoors in a way that they have a minimum impact on the environment, yet still survive in it, feel comfortable in it, enjoy the experiences, and leave revitalized. (Andrews, 2003)

This way people can learn to challenge themselves and grow through play by participating in outdoor activities while understanding that they are also a species

dependent on these parts of this planet. This type of program is what Andrews and Priest (1999a) define as the most effective form of outdoor education. This is the type of program design and educational philosophy I try to promote through my practice as an outdoor educator.

Research Purpose

I felt it was only appropriate to undertake an introspective return to the roots of my craft, outdoor education, so that I could reflect on my craft and answer my research questions: *What do I do as an outdoor educator? What drives my actions in the field? What influences me? As an outdoor educator, what is my educational philosophy? How can I improve my craft? How can reflective practice as a form of research improve practitioners' understanding of their craft?* To explore this phenomenon, as Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) do, I bound my autobiography with a historical outlook regarding the practice I wished to study: my own. Then, I explored my experiences in relation to three other educators who have also studied their craft so that I could present a wider view of this phenomenon. As Creswell (2008) and Ellis (2004) instruct, to conduct this study I have decided to implement an inductive research approach where I grounded relevant academic theory in my data rather than starting with a formal hypothesis. By doing this, I constructed an autoethnography of my craft where I focused the direction of study, first, inward towards my personal self, and then, outward to the world that defines my professional self (Bochner, 1997; Ellis & Bochner, 2003, 2006; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

Chapter Two: Procedures

From this point, for me to define the phenomenon I wished to study as the craft of outdoor education or to define myself as just an outdoor educator was too general.

Brookes (2004) argues, after studying several seminal outdoor education texts, that mainstream outdoor education theory frequently explains and justifies universal, absolute terms incapable of resolving the question of outdoor education's educational worth. He argues that often literature published in the field of outdoor education uses context-free rationales that legitimize the purposes for outdoor education. He found that this body of discourse used three

rhetorical devices: (1) treating education as personal development, with only limited acknowledgment of the social functions and contexts of education (2) omitting the outdoors from aims and purposes, or treating the outdoors as monolithic, and (3) describing aims and purposes in broad and abstract terms.

(Brookes, 2004, p. 22)

Brookes concludes that by adopting any or all of these positions drastically reduces the capacities of the proffered theories to: (a) help determine if any given program is necessary, or (b) help determine what programs are necessary.

So, as a person and practitioner who was constructing a text on outdoor education, to simply state that my personal characteristics as a Caucasian, well-educated, Canadian male who has largely been employed by Southern Ontario-based organizations was not enough. Though, I do feel I am typical of a large group of professionals sharing similar experiences to my own. To discover if my practice had any educational worth, it was

important for me to situate my practice within the pragmatic context of my life.

Therefore, I decided to provide a short chronological autobiography about my lived experience as an outdoor educator to illuminate the context of the initial site of my study.

My Introspective Site of Study

As a member of the Ontario College of Teachers, my craft, outdoor education, “at the present tends to be looked upon as an innovation - as something that has just been discovered or a new dimension in teaching and learning” (Gillenwater, 1969, p. 315). This is simply not true; instead it is indoor education that is new. As Gillenwater argues “Outdoor Education is as old as mankind. Learning began in the out-of-doors as people learned to cope with their environment and with the incidents they met in wrestling for food and shelter” (p. 315). It was not until people began to develop nations, like the United States and Canada, that it was decided that these countries could not survive and grow unless their citizens were literate people. At this time, learning was funneled inside the classroom to train the minds of people to learn to read, write, and conduct basic mathematics (Sharp, 1948).

“As new needs arose, more subjects were added. The pattern for broadening the curriculum was set” (Sharp, 1948, p. 314). Education began to emphasize learning from books, laboratories, and through indoor experiences (Gillenwater, 1969). Somehow, “in the change from outdoor to indoor instruction, education came to be regarded as something different and apart from learning in the out-of-doors” (Gillenwater, p. 315). This has embedded a stereotype in North American culture; one where Andrews (2003) argues that outdoor education is viewed as something that, “disrupts school routines,

costs money, uses administrative time, and involves certain liability considerations” (p. 1). Today, there is a popular perception amongst educators and the public that outdoor education runs counter to the basics of education (literacy and numeracy). Outdoor education, “consists solely of activities such as playing games in the schoolyard and chasing one another through the woods at a field centre” (Andrews, p. 1). This has devalued the benefits of outdoor education and has, in turn, contributed to a disconnect between children and their knowledge of natural environments. This results in students expecting to see wildlife, like whales, in freshwater lakes (Gillespie & Kalinowski, October 10, 2006).

As far back as 1947, a contemporary pioneer of the current outdoor education and camping education movement, L. B. Sharp, published in the *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*, “The evidence is clear that we learn best through direct experience” (p. 47). From this point, current academic researchers, such as Brookes (2002), now argue that outdoor education is a subject that should be taught within the school system. From his perspective, it is important to teach people about their local natural environments. Other people I have met over my years in the field of outdoor education have told me it is not a subject but a methodology, or a specific way to teach. This view is supported by C.O.E.O. in their 2007 research summary written by Foster and Linney. These authors argue that as a methodology, outdoor education “directly exposes children and youth to the natural environment in ways that develop powerful, knowledgeable and lifelong connections essential for a healthy and sustainable future” (p. 3). This is accomplished in four ways for children through: (a) education for the community, (b) education for wellbeing, (c) education for character, and (d)

education for the environment. These authors argue that outdoor education can take many forms and occur in many places from urban to remote settings. Because of this, outdoor education “distinguishes itself from classroom learning by using the student’s whole environment as a source of knowledge . . . it uses the outdoors - both natural and constructed to promote learning from experience, and can be used to enrich every curriculum subject” (p. 10). This runs contrary to Sharp’s (1947) argument that only certain aspects of the curriculum are better suited to be taught outdoors.

Andrews (2003) argues,

Education in the outdoors should not be a separate area of learning with its own set of goals and procedures. Instead its goals are best attained and most effectively integrated into the learners’ lives if what is done outdoors connects with what is done in the classroom. (p. 6)

I agree with this opinion because it supports Sharp’s (1947) comment that education outdoors needs to be connected to education indoors and infers that some aspects of education are better taught indoors. What I mean by this is (a) that outdoor education cannot be used to enrich every aspect of a curriculum, and (b) that I use the outdoors as a site to teach aspects of the curriculum better learned or enriched through outdoor experiences.

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In 2007, the Ontario Ministry of Education indicated support for this type of vision in a report by the Working Group on Environmental Education. This report was undertaken by the Ministry of Education in response to: (a) a fragmented and inconsistent environmental education policy in the current curriculum, (b) a need for a comprehensive

framework for environmental education, and (c) the global urgency to changes in our planet's environment.

While the issues are complex and diverse, there is a shared and universal recognition that solutions will arise only through committed action on a global, nation, regional, local, and individual scale. Schools have a vital role to play in preparing our young people to take their place as informed, engaged, and empowered citizens who will be pivotal in shaping the future of our communities, our province, our country, and our global environment (Working group, 2007, p. 1).

This document was written by a group, organized and chaired by Dr. Roberta Bondar, comprised of six leading educators: Dr. Eleanor Dudar, Dr. Allan Foster, Dr. Michael Fox, Catherine Mahler, Pamela Schwartzberg, and Marlène Walsh. This report indicates that outdoor education is a critical component to environmental education, "concerned with providing experiential learning in the environment to foster a connection to local places, develop a greater understanding of ecosystems, and provide a unique context for learning" (Working Group, 2007, p. 6). Through this vision, Ontario students will be provided with the opportunities, knowledge, and skills to achieve, "*their potential, to pursue lifelong learning, and to contribute to a prosperous, cohesive society*" (p. 1).

Extending these ideas to other organizations which operate outdoor education programs, I argue that whether it be the Ontario Ministry of Education's curriculum, the Toronto Regional Conservation Authority's curriculum for transforming Toronto into a

sustainable *Living City*, or the curriculum of an organization like the Greater Toronto YMCA that aims, “to foster an inclusive society that welcomes everyone – regardless of background, circumstances, or abilities” (YMCA of Greater Toronto, 2007), outdoor education is an approach to improve lifelong learning, “by using the outdoors and all its resources” (Smith, 1970). It is a means of curriculum enrichment by connecting learning indoors and through text to experiences in and for the outdoors (Smith, 1970). Therefore, the basic thesis of outdoor and camping education is:

That which can best be learned inside the classroom should be learned there; and that which can best be learned through direct experience outside the classroom, in contact with native materials and life situations, should there be learned.

(Sharp, 1947, p. 47)

I define myself as an outdoor educator because this is the specialty of my craft. I understand how to make these connections, how to use the outdoors to promote links between curricula and the outdoor environment. As a member of the Ontario College of Teachers, I know which Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum expectations are better learned in the outdoor environment. Beyond that, I have an understanding of other programs that aim to educate the general public. In this way, it is my view that Canadian outdoor education is not solely isolated to the public education system, but is integrated within a variety of programs such as parks and conservation authorities, summer camps which offer children opportunities to live and participate in outdoor experiences during their summers off from school, commercial ventures which offer specialized services such as challenge courses or expeditionary programs to private consumers, and postsecondary education and recreation programs which focus on training people to be

employees for these programs (Potter & Henderson, 2001). In this way, I view outdoor education as a diverse and interdisciplinary educational system, one that I have played a small role in from my own partial and situated perspective working for summer camps and outdoor education centres.

To reach this point where I now call myself an outdoor educator, I have lived a path through residential camping and graduated to not-for-profit outdoor education centres that also provide conference services. I started on this path as a child when my parents sent me away for several summers to participate in what Potter and Henderson (2001) describe as a longstanding Canadian tradition called summer camp. Throughout my childhood, my parents sent me to a variety of different day and residential summer camps owned and operated by the local universities in the Region of Waterloo, performing arts centres, the Lutheran Church, and the YMCA. During the summer I would hike, paddle, sing, draw, write, shoot arrows, go on canoe trips, and learn how to cook over a fire, make craft items from natural materials, and build shelters in the woods.

During the school season, my teachers would organize field trips to local farmsteads to pick apples and strawberries. I learned that food did not come from the grocery store, but from the planet itself. We would take trips to field centres owned and operated by the Waterloo County District School Board. Just as Wallace (2002) reminisces about her experiences as a child visiting the Wrigley's Corners Outdoor Education Centre, I also played the same curriculum linked role-playing game, called *Survival*, where my classmates and I were given an animal to simulate and then let loose in a forest to search for our animal mate, food, water, and shelter, all the while watching out for predators ready to pounce. Then, back in the classroom, we discussed the

different types of animals such as herbivores, omnivores, and carnivores, their habitats, and how each survived. My teachers would take us on nature rambles in the woods behind our school. As kids we were never dressed in designer outdoor fashion. That was not of concern to us or our parents. "If it rained we got wet and accepted it as part of the day" (Noble, 1995, p. 20). Through these experiences I developed my initial love for the outdoors.

When I turned 17 years old, this was the service industry where I got my first job. Shortly after my birthday, I remember signing my first seasonal contract and becoming a counselor for YMCA Camp Wabanaki. This job lasted 2 ½ months over June, July, and August. My responsibilities were relatively simple: keep my campers safe and deliver fun programs throughout their 2 week scheduled sessions. Over the months of July and August I taught children how to shoot a bow and arrow, act in a play, and guide canoe trips. In turn, the kids taught me how to sail, play guitar, and act as a caregiver for groups of 12 children at a time. After I finished my contract at Camp Wabanaki, I returned to high school. From there I took three summers off from camping because I could make more money working as a lifeguard for the City of Kitchener. As a lifeguard I was employed all year, but the camping industry could only offer me seasonal employment.

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Somehow though, a few years later I had the urge to return to camp. This occurred during the second year of my undergraduate education at the University of Waterloo, studying Recreation and Leisure Studies. At the time, I had decided to major in my department's Parks Option. In early January, I found myself at the university's Career Services office asking about spring and summer employment opportunities that

could provide me with practical experience working in the outdoors. At that time, I was encouraged to focus on summer camps based on my experiences as a counselor and lifeguard. After applying for several support and senior staff positions, attending several interviews across Southern Ontario with the fortunate support of my parents, I accepted a job as a canoe trip guide at Camp Tamakwa for a small seasonal salary and a chance to paddle the lakes of Algonquin Provincial Park. After returning to University the following fall, I considered a career as a summer camp director. Later, I would change that goal, but for the following summer I applied again to several summer camps across Ontario searching for a job with more responsibility.

Soon thereafter, I accepted another camp job that required more responsibility and offered a greater salary. This was at Camp Kawartha and Outdoor Centre (operated by the Rotary Club) as their Waterfront Director. There I was responsible for supervising and maintaining all the waterfront activities and equipment. This included water sports such as kayaking, canoeing, sailing, windsurfing, swimming, and lifesaving lessons. It also meant managing a camp staff of approximately 20 people while they delivered these programs at the waterfront. During my time at Camp Kawartha and Outdoor Centre, I met a naturalist who recognized my interest in nature craft. He provided me several opportunities to learn from him how to recognize edible and poisonous plants, bake bannock and boil pine needle tea over an open fire, build native shelters, and craft rope from cattail reeds. At the end of a hot and tiring summer, I returned to university to finish the final two semesters of my undergraduate education. The following spring and summer I decided to stay at my current job with the City of Kitchener. This time, though, I was a Head Swimming Instructor and Lifeguard.

Near the end of that summer I again began searching for more naturally focused outdoor-based employment. Surfing the internet one day near the end of August I decided to check the Ontario Camping Association's job board to see what jobs were available during the off season at summer camps. After a 3 hour drive up to Torrance, Ontario for an interview at YMCA Camp PineCrest, located in the heart of Ontario's famous Muskoka region (cottage country), I got a job as part of YMCA Camp PineCrest's Outdoor Education team, operated by the Greater Toronto YMCA. Again, I found myself working on a seasonal contract. However, this time I had gained employment during the fall season. At the end of October the camp closed for the winter and I returned home to Kitchener.

This job opened the door for me to work as an occasional Outdoor Education Facilitator at another Greater Toronto YMCA site called YMCA Cedar Glen Outdoor Discovery Campus and Conference Centre. This centre had only been opened for 2 years prior to my arrival and was located just outside of Toronto, Ontario, in the countryside of King County. Each month I would receive a few calls from the centre's director asking me to come over for a few days' work. At the time, as a lifeguard, I was fortunate enough to have a supervisor at the City of Kitchener who supported my career aspirations and covered for me on short-term notice whenever I would get a call.

One year later I was no longer working as a lifeguard, but, instead, working and living on site as a regular for YMCA Cedar Glen's outdoor education team. At this time, the centre was still new, only 2 years old. Each season I worked I signed a new contract. At this time, the centre transitioned to a new program director who was very interested in challenge course programming. Gaining a grant in its first year, the centre had built three

challenge courses on site which are essentially large playgrounds 30 or more feet in the air made out of steel cable, ropes, wood, and other hardware suspended between utility poles that people climb or traverse using rock climbing equipment (Haras et al., 2006). These programs involved the use of perceived risk, created through the controlled vertical climbing environment of a challenge course, to promote participants to learn about themselves and each other. This type of program flourished because the site had no waterfront to offer traditional camp and outdoor centre watercraft activities. After participating in a weekend challenge course workshop, called a Ropes Course Instructor's course offered by Adventureworks! Associates, I found myself being mentored by the new director to facilitate the centre's challenge course programs. During this period at YMCA Cedar Glen, I learned a great deal, made a lot of mistakes, and also decided that if I wanted to go further in a career as an outdoor educator I had to become a teacher.

After applying to several Ontario Universities for one of the Province's short year long preservice teacher education programs, I was accepted into the University of Windsor's Faculty of Education. The next fall I found myself studying to earn my credentials to become a Member of the Ontario College of Teachers. During this program, I was placed at the end of March at the Greater Essex District County School Board's outdoor science field education centre. Apparently, this was the school board's secret gem located a short boat ride from the port of Amherstberg, Ontario, on Fighting Island, located in the middle of the Detroit River. For 3 weeks I had the opportunity to practice teaching curriculum related programs to intermediate and senior level public school students. There I taught three similar integrated curriculum programs that focused on teaching environmental science lessons on soil and water quality, wildlife

identification, and we even took some time to catch some of the thousands of Butlers Garter snakes that called the island home. After graduation, I returned to YMCA Cedar Glen for another summer to operate their challenge course programs for their outdoor education, conference centre, residential and day camp programs. At the time, the title on my contract was as part of the residential camp's support staff. However, in person, I was told by the general manager and outdoor education supervisor that I was their Challenge Course Operator.

The next fall I found myself enrolled in a graduate program at Brock University, with an interest in studying outdoor education. At that time I also gained a job as a consultant for a challenge course company called Adventureworks! Associates. After working on an occasional basis for this company, I decided to return to YMCA Cedar Glen for another spring and summer season. This time the title on my contract was Program Associate, but, in person, I was referred to by my peers as an Outdoor Experiential Educator. My responsibilities included the direct delivery of outdoor education programs which involved facilitating a variety of activities from challenge course programs to stream studies. I was also hired to develop new programs and link existing programs to the Ontario Ministry of Education's curriculum, though my responsibilities grew beyond this department when the summer camp's head lifeguard quit 3 weeks into their season. As one of the only trained lifeguards working on site at the time, I was asked to fill in as a lifeguard Wednesday to Friday afternoons for YMCA Cedar Glen's day camp. During this time I spent at YMCA Cedar Glen, I kept a reflective journal to record my daily actions so that I could document and improve my practice as an outdoor educator. This was a skill I learned during my time in the Pre-

Service Education program at the University of Windsor. It was something that I found extremely helpful for my teaching practice and something I thought would also help with my practice at YMCA Cedar Glen.

YMCA Cedar Glen

For several years I had been employed on a contractual basis by the Greater Toronto YMCA, specifically working at YMCA Cedar Glen Outdoor Discovery Campus and Conference Centre. The last contract I completed at Cedar Glen was a seasonal contract for the period of April 25 to August 30, 2007, where I was employed as a program associate for the Outdoor Experiential Education (OEE) department which focused on providing outdoor education programs throughout the school year (Staff Manual, 2007). This involved both outdoor skill-based programs and environmental learning programs. As a Member of the Ontario College of Teachers, I was hired to support this department by focusing on developing links for these programs to the Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum, as well as deliver Cedar Glen's already established OEE programs.

From my own personal knowledge, working for several years with this association, I would like to make it clear that the Greater Toronto YMCA is no longer operating under the acronym that represents the Young Men's Christian Association. Instead, they have adopted the acronym as their name: YMCA. This decision was made several years before I became an employee of the Greater Toronto YMCA because the nature of this region and need of the public is more than a male, Christian population. "At the YMCA of Greater Toronto, we have a vision to connect people, connect with

youth and connect with our community. We aim to foster an inclusive society that welcomes everyone – regardless of background, circumstances, or abilities” (YMCA, 2007). It can clearly be interpreted from this mission statement that this YMCA does not emphasize Christian values; rather, the emphasis is on community values.

However, this YMCA does recognize that its philosophical and historical foundations have been built upon its past which drew from a Christian belief structure (YMCA, 2001). Yet, from personal experience, this historical past does not impact this YMCA’s current function as a not-for-profit community organization because Toronto “is the most popular destination for immigrants in Canada resulting in a remarkable ethnic diversification over the past 30 years, to the point where visible minorities are hardly a minority” (Bone, 2005, p. 285). YMCA Cedar Glen, and in extension the Greater Toronto YMCA, exists to serve this diverse population. The YMCA accomplishes this by providing a variety of facilities, services, and programs to meet community needs such as understanding the environments we live and interact in.

Looking more specifically at YMCA Cedar Glen during the fall, winter, and spring season, there are a variety of groups that visit the site for conferences, recreation, or educational programs. These groups participate in a variety of activities, from programs they design themselves, to programs facilitated by YMCA OEE staff such as mountain biking, rock wall climbing, and stream studies. During the summer season, a wider variety of groups and YMCA specific programs use the site including a YMCA Day Camp serving around 100 children a week, a recently developed residential camp serving around 70 children a week, the Future Leaders of the YMCA (FLY) program serving approximately 40 adolescents over the summer, as well as other conference and

recreational groups. It was my responsibility to design and deliver a variety of outdoor education programs to this diverse group of clients. This is the context in which I decided to start my introspective inquiry.

Living Theory

From this point, I started this introspective research project employing an epistemology of living theory based on my belief that as human beings we all have our own intuitive knowledge of how we do things (Bochner, 1997; Schön, 1983, 1995; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). For example, when practitioners examine their own knowledge, an awareness of this knowledge can provide reflexive information that other practitioners can use to improve their practice (Dana & Yedol-Silva, 2003). Holt (2001) conducted this type of research when investigating what ideas and beliefs guided his practices as a postsecondary educator in a department of Physical Education. Placier, Pinnegar, Hamilton, & Guilfoyle (2006), Russell (2006), and Whitehead (1989, 2000) conducted similar introspective studies to define the discipline of their practice as teacher educators with their respective Faculties of Education. Bochner (1997) used this epistemology to look at how his personal life experiences were disconnected from his academic interests. McCarville (2007) used this epistemology to examine how a personal interest in triathlons illustrated some of his academic interests in Leisure Studies.

Making My Appeal to Action

What attracted me to this epistemology was that this source of knowledge draws upon a paradigm of action research. By doing so, I positioned myself and my actions as the object of inquiry, instead of positioning myself as separate from my objects of inquiry (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). This required that I espoused the human values of care and compassion, a concern for freedom, and the right to make up my own mind about how I did my research. As Whitehead and McNiff argue, I wish to live “in negotiation with others who wish to do the same” (p. 24).

Ontologically this means that as a practitioner, I value my own embodied knowledge as an outdoor educator from which I come to understand my craft and my personal theories (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). Epistemologically, I recognize that knowledge comes in many forms, including my own capacity to create knowledge and draw insights from it so that I can identify and become aware of my educational influences (Bochner, 1997; Whitehead & McNiff). Methodologically, this meant that I engaged in a disciplined and systematic enquiry for the purpose of discovering what my personal educational philosophy is and how reflective practice, as a form of research, can improve a practitioner’s understanding of his craft. From this perspective, I demonstrated my understanding of this phenomenon by constructing a statement of my personal educational philosophy to influence my future practice (Levin et al., 2005; Parkay et al., 2005; Whitehead, 1989; Whitehead & McNiff), then compared these aspects of my personal educational philosophy to the existing literature exploring these same issues (Creswell, 2008).

Through this process, I permitted myself as a practitioner to study my living theories introspectively for the purpose of improving my application of these theories embedded within my practice (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006; Whitehead, 1989; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). This process started with me, the researcher, as the central informant instead of the academic literature (Bochner, 1997; Dana & Yendol-Silva, 2003). This method employed a qualitative storytelling structure that began with the meaning of the study and, as you will read later, will unfold, “through descriptions, the author’s reflection on the meaning of the data, a larger understanding of the phenomenon, and a return to the author’s stance on the topic” (Creswell, 2008, p. 281). This type of qualitative storytelling structure describes the *procedures* I engaged in as a researcher to contextualize my study. As you continue to read, it will end with the meaning of the phenomenon, and present “this meaning in terms of the larger understandings, a comparison with published studies, and the author’s own experiences” (Creswell, p. 281-282). This has meant that the literature has played an important role during the data collection process and its analysis, instead of acting as a source for synthesizing concepts. It engaged in a creative interplay with my own reflexive introspection (Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Parry & Johnson, 2007). For the purposes of this study, I viewed existing literature as a complementary source of secondary data to be tested against the living theories I discover through my practice (Lomax, 1986; J. Novak, personal communication, December 12, 2007; Ronai, 1995; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

Constructing an Autoethnography of My Practice

Therefore, I decided to construct this qualitative story as an autoethnography which is a research methodology that allows me to study a culture for which I am a member (Patton, 2002). To accomplish this, I analyzed the reflective journal entries I have kept over the past spring and summer season while working at YMCA Cedar Glen, as well as the narratives of three other outdoor educators who examined their practice, and Ontario newspaper reports. By triangulating these data sources, through my analysis of this data I constructed an introspective narrative using the sociological writing format of a layered account to test and compare how my living theories influenced my educational philosophy (Jago, 1996; Lerum, 2001; Ronai, 1995, 1998). This writing format enabled me (as a researcher) to break from conventional scientific writing formats, integrating my autoethnography with other sources of knowledge (Jago; Lerum; Ronai, 1995, 1998; Richardson, 2003). This writing format was then engaged to construct an autoethnography about my experiences as an outdoor educator and how they are related to the narratives of other outdoor educators researching their own craft (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006).

Coda A: Notes from My Thesis Defense

The following information has been provided to summarize the preceding writing as addressed at my thesis defense. It has been included here to illustrate to readers, in point form, the key issues that the following pages addressed.

- What is Outdoor Education
 - Teaching Methods:
 - Learning that is best learned through direct experience outside the classroom with native materials (Sharp, 1947).
 - Teaching people about their relationship to their environment, themselves, and their interactions in it (Priest, 1999).
 - Subject Area:
 - Students learn about their local environments (Brookes, 2002).
 - Teaching Approach and Subject area:
 - OE is “concerned with providing experiential learning in the environment to foster a connection to local places, develop a greater understanding of ecosystems, and provide a unique context for learning” (Working Group, 2007, p. 6).
 - As an outdoor educator, for me, outdoor education (OE) is a simple concept. *I use the outdoors to teach what is best learned in nature from native materials.*

- *I teach people about their relationships to the natural environment, themselves, and other people through activities such as:*
 - Track identification;
 - Foraging for edible plants;
 - Outdoor cooking;
 - Camping;
 - And challenge course programs.
- *I teach people various ways to interpret their surroundings. I provide people an opportunity to use their senses to practice their interpretive skills, “to see, to hear, and to gain an understanding of the environment around oneself” (Ambry, 1980, p. 51).*

- Reflective practice in OE

- Trained as a *reflective practitioner* during my Pre-Service Teacher education program, returning to the field of outdoor education I decided to keep a daily reflective journal about my practice.
- Purpose: to provoke daily professional reflection about critical incidents.
 - Understand my personal education philosophy (PEP).
 - PEP: are statements of beliefs an educator uses to guide his educational craft.

- Craft: the creative synergy between an educator's PEP and his actions taken in practice (Tregust & Harrison, 1999).
- Higgins & Nicol (2002) argue that reflective practice should be a central aim to improving an outdoor educator's craft. They argue it provides an opportunity for educators to reflect on their actions and ensure they are achieving their stated aims.
- Andrews (2003) argues, "you cannot defend something unless your viewpoint is clear and consistent. A philosophy is a values system that guides behavior. Therefore a philosophy of outdoor education directs your actions when you are designing outdoor programs" (p. 14).
- Literature Review
 - As a graduate student I became interested in the use of reflective practice and personal educational philosophies (PEP) in OE, after reviewing OE literature I began to sense a pattern emerging that I also experienced in my OE practice.
 - OE programs framed by *Glib expressions* (Goodman & Knapp, 1981).
 - *Outdoor educators unable to clarify¹ goals, curriculum focuses, and beliefs*
 - Undue emphasis being placed on areas such as:
 - skill development, social skills, & group dynamics;

- *largely using* high intensity *outdoor pursuits* (Andrews, 2003; Henderson, 2007). Outdoor pursuits *represent self-propelled activities such as orienteering, rock climbing & white water paddling, performed in outdoor settings* (Andrews, 2003; Priest, 1999).
- Loynes (1998) argues this view of OE is driven by the popular demand these activities attract, and the potential wealth generated.
 - OE programs are being delivered as packages he calls “adventures in a bun”
 - based on Ritzer’s (1993) thesis about the McDonalization of Society.
- Brookes (1993) argues that when commercial appeal and pursuit of wealth drive OE programs = shallow OE. Andrews (2003) argues, in Ontario, these actions are changing public perceptions about OE.
- This concerns me, because as Novak (2002) states, it is *important* for an educator *to be able to describe and justify* the actions he performs.
- Based on my experiences working in this field, I argue that this commercial focus is changing what many practitioners and academics alike view as OE and the potential it can accomplish.

- The Research Problem
 - Sensing this pattern, as an outdoor educator, I began to question the nature of my personal educational philosophy (PEP).
 - As an outdoor educator, just like Donaldson (1950), I argue it is important for me to reflect on my practice, so I understand my PEP:
 - the kind of educator I am and the type of programs I run;
 - the kind of educator I want to be and the program(s) I want to run.
- Questioning My Educational Philosophy
 - I asked myself six questions:
 - *What do I do as an outdoor educator?*
 - *What drives my actions in the field?*
 - *What influences me?*
 - *As an outdoor educator what is my educational philosophy?*
 - *How can I improve my craft?*
 - *How can reflective practice as a form of research improve practitioners' understanding of their craft?*

Chapter Three: What is Autoethnography?

Autoethnography is conceptualized as a form of writing that allows researchers to take their readers on their personal journey. Ellis (2004) describes it as a way of blending sociological and literary practices for the purpose of writing a sociological story that elicits a relationship between the authors cultural narrative and their audience.

Describing a conversation between herself and a potential student, Ellis (1999) explains,

Well, I start with my personal life. I pay attention to my physical feelings, thoughts, and emotions. I use what I call systematic sociological introspection and emotional recall to try to understand an experience I've lived through. Then I write about my experience as a story. By exploring a particular life, I hope to understand a way of life. (p. 671)

This involves interpreting critical incidents from the author's life (Henderson, 2005).

Brenner (1984) and Bookfield (1995) define critical incidents as episodes where professionals feel they made a difference either directly or indirectly in regards to their relationships with other people, like nurses do for their patients or educators do for their students. These include incidents that are very ordinary, went unusually well, where there was a breakdown, was demanding, or captures the essence of a particular practice or craft (Brenner).

Autoethnography allows me, as a researcher to ask myself: How does my own experience of this culture connect with and offer insights about this way of life (Patton, 2002)? It is a methodology that tries to elicit readers to reflect on their own personal experiences that are similar to those explored by the author. Ellis (2004) writes that this

is important because many people today talk less about critical incidents from their lives than they once did.

I think we need to talk. Many readers have had similar experiences and don't know how to think or talk about them. Our experience seems to help people reflect on the issue and their lives even when some of them end up condemning us for our actions. I see this kind of reflection as the pedagogical strength of autoethnography. (p. 84)

Therefore, autoethnography is a research methodology that engages prose and theory in action as an evocative form of analytical writing that produces highly personalized, revealing texts where authors tell stories about their lived experiences (Holt, 2001, 2003; Markula, 2003; Richardson, 2000; Sparkes, 2002, 2003; Tiihonen, 2003). Simply put, it is a self-written narrative where the researcher's personal accounts are constructed in an evocative fashion to elicit a rapport and connection with his audience.

The Limitations of Autoethnography

In conducting research that focuses first upon the self, this method has faced a serious sociocultural limitation in that it is often misunderstood by the dominant epistemology of the academy. Advocating for the use of autoethnography within the field of mental health nursing, Foster, McAllister, & O'Brien (2006) argue, "the emergence of autoethnography or 'narrative of the self' has been contested within the social sciences, and its status as a 'legitimate' form of research within a traditionally dominant discourse of objective postpositivism has been one of tension" (p. 48). This observation is supported by other prominent academics making use of autoethnography: Ellis and

Bochner (2003), Holt (2003), and Sparkes (2000). “Autoethnography has been subject to various criticisms including claims of narcissism, self-absorption, exaggeration, and self-indulgence on the part of the researcher who is using personal experience as a central focus of their research” (Foster et al., 2006, p. 48).

This can be viewed in such critiques of ethnographic practice by sociologists, such as Gans (1999), who argues, “the only ethnography that will be useful to students and researchers is that enabling people to learn more about their society” (p. 543-544). Gans then goes on to critique autoethnography, arguing that its nonempirical nature, “represents not only the climax of the preoccupation with the self. . . but also the product of a postmodern asocial theory of knowledge that argues the impossibility of knowing anything beyond the self” (p. 453). Upon this comment, Gans adds, “Little attention is paid to the socioeconomic and political aspects of social injustice, however, or to the uses of ethnography for reducing these” (p. 542). I have experienced this type of argument as a graduate student when confronted by many professors within my own university who have posed the question, “*Is that really what you want to do?*” and one visiting professor even said, “*I’m sorry to hear that*” when I initially mentioned that I was interested in writing an autoethnography as my Master’s thesis. The value I see in autoethnography is a methodology that enables me to write about my real life accounts as an outdoor educator and link my experiences with the larger world of my craft: education (Hayano, 1979; Sparkes, 2003). I have written this because I want to engage readers through story, to show them how the process of professional reflection has helped me explore how I perform my craft, and has acted as a resource for improving my craft (Schwab, 1973). I

have also written this to provide documentation where other academic authors might wish to reposition their theories (Sparkes, 2003).

After all, the bias in traditional academic writing divides the self from the subject, appealing to abstract ideas over experiential events (Richardson, 1990). This constructs a body of distractions that perpetuate a gap between academic theory and the personal world (Bochner, 1997; Sparkes, 2003). Markula (2003) explored this very question examining her own body image in her autoethnography, *Bodily Dialogue: Writing the Self*. Writing about her experience at a conference, she explains how she came to realize that as she and other researchers discussed the discursive construction about the shape of women's bodies, they did not once mention their own bodies.

After that session, I felt strongly that the absence of the researcher's embodied voice created a false dichotomy between us, the researchers with no body trouble, and them, the researched who continuously and unsuccessfully battled their body-image problems. Who would take us, I pondered, the body-image experts without a body image problem seriously? (p. 42)

False dichotomies, like Markula's (2003), widen the gap between theory and practice, especially when academia assumes the public is aware of their knowledge (Schön, 1983). This gap is perpetuated by a model of Technical Rationality which still influences a positivistic philosophy of science upon, "Western ideas and institutions" (Schön, 1983, p. 31). It ineffectively links theory and practice to a model that maintains an epistemological hierarchy of knowledge perpetuated by 300 years of positivist doctrine within modern Western universities. It situates the culture of scientific knowledge at the

top of a vine of pendent theory as a higher form of knowledge than that embedded within indigenous cultures and practicing professionals (Bowers, 1998; Dewey, 1925).

This model does not acknowledge a third type of knowledge embedded within the indigenous cultures of the world and even professionals' ecological knowledge of their practice which I refer to as craft. I argue that this notion of craft includes the practice of science which requires skillful application of technique or practice.

When someone is seen as practicing their [sic] craft it refers to a way of Being centred in becoming through making with care. This transaction almost always requires the use of tools and techniques, which always shape the user's Being - functionally, morally, and symbolically. (Wattchow, 2001, p. 23)

When a craft or practice is performed with care, it is a form of ecology coalescing in a healthy relationship with community and the environment (Wattchow). Bowers (1993, 2006) argues this notion of craft should include universities. However, while universities, and, in particular, the academics within their faculties, maintain positivism as their dominant epistemology, the recognition of science as a craft will not be possible.

According to Richardson (1990, 2000) and Schön (1983), the Technical Rational model perpetuated by the heritage of Positivism is a, "powerful philosophical doctrine that grew up in the nineteenth century as an account of the rise of science and technology and as a social movement aimed at applying the achievements of science and technology to the well-being of mankind" (Schön, 1983, p. 31). This model, "became institutionalized in the modern university, founded in the late nineteenth century when Positivism was at its height" (p. 31). It is shaped by the view that professional knowledge is created solely by its relations to research and institutional education which consist of,

“instrumental problem solving made rigorous by the application of scientific theory and technique. . . only the professions practice rigorously technical problem solving based on specialized scientific knowledge” (Schön, 1983, p. 21-22).

Schön (1983, 1995) argues that this belief is still very much alive within many Western universities as researchers attempt to dictate to professionals, models, and theories that they can apply to specific situations as a means of solving problems within the field through the technical execution of expertise dictated by science. However, this view fits theories to specific situations that do not always occur as they should everyday life. In everyday life, problems blend into each other in unpredictable ways and require professionals to be creative in their solutions to these situations (Schön, 1983). The Positivist epistemology is based solely on empirical observations of researchers and perpetuates the belief that the only significant statements about the world are those based on this type of observation, “and all disagreements about the world could be resolved, in principle, by reference to observable facts” (Schön, 1983, p. 33). It is not researchers that are regularly in the field, but it is believed through this epistemology that if a situation is not empirically testable, it is held to have no meaning and is dismissed as, “emotive utterance, poetry, or mere nonsense” (Schön, 1983, p. 33).¹

However, this is exactly what autoethnography² tries to elicit and use to express embodied or tacit knowledge that typically cannot be reached through empirical research methods. It seeks to engage readers by blending a person’s lived experience and the craft of science to elicit visceral experiences within his readers. Autoethnography does not devalue empiricism, but perceived through the words of Gans (1999), it seems that some practitioners of the scientific craft believe it does. As different as both these worlds may

seem, I must admit they are more alike than some scholars would argue. Schön (1983) argues that people who rely on the Technically Rational world of higher knowledge, “have become too skillful at techniques of selective inattention, junk categories, and situational control, techniques which they use to preserve the constancy of their knowledge-in-practice. For them, uncertainty is a threat; its admission is a sign of weakness” (Schön, 1983, p. 69). They both present biased claims to objective authority, but the truth is that as a practitioner I use them as complimentary approaches (Collison & Hockey, 2005). Therefore, “autoethnographic writing requires a resilience, persistence, and a strong belief in the value of the genre due to the criticisms and rejection that may be encountered in presenting it as scholarly work” (Foster et al., 2006, p. 49).

However, beyond this misunderstanding regarding the value of the autoethnography, its real limitations lay in its subjective nature (Foster et al., 2006). Its use of the researcher’s self requires researchers, “to use particular qualities and skills. Being prepared to write and publish autobiographic work calls for the writer to possess sufficient courage to reveal what is usually kept private and bring it into a public arena” (Foster et al., p. 49). It relies on self disclosure of its researchers’ biased perceptions about the experience under investigation and requires them to write honestly (Ellis, 2004; Foster et al.). From this perspective, the key concern of autoethnographers is that they may not allow their biases to be completely exposed (Ellis, 2004). This is a concern of mine because I feel I may not have been successful in justifying the subjective basis of my autoethnography (M. Connolly, personal communication, March 26, 2008).

In addition, the “process of autoethnography further requires the researcher to be willing to experience vulnerability, recall previous experiences and emotions, and be able

to reflect upon them in an evocative way” (Foster et al., 2006, p. 49). This requires that researchers write evocatively, using creativity and expressiveness that stretches beyond traditional academic writing (Ellis, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 2003, 2006; Foster et al.; Holt, 2003). “This may prove too challenging for some” (Foster et al., p. 49), including a researcher’s colleagues (Richardson, 2006). This is because writing about the self, “presents restrictions in terms of understanding the ‘other’. As a form of interpretation, it does not allow us to understand completely the inner life of another. It is simply an interpretation of such” (Foster et al., p. 49).

Rationale for Writing an Autoethnography

As Becker (1967) and Charmaz (2006) both argue, academic writing is merely researchers’ interpretations of what they perceive as an objective reality. To strengthen their studies, they should expose the moral implications of the choices they have made in constructing their final product. Ellis (1999) questions whether a researcher can ever truly capture experience. Ellis (1999) argues that research is,

always a story about the past, and that’s really all field notes are: one selective story about what happened written from a particular point of view at a particular point in time for a particular purpose. But if representation is your goal, it’s best to have as many sources and levels of story recorded at different times as possible. (p. 673)

Therefore, I have chosen to situate my scholarly knowledge in the subjective accounts of stories from my life (Duncan, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 2003, 2006; Havitz, 2007; Holt, 2001, 2003; Markula, 2003; McCarville, 2007; Richardson, 1990, 2000, 2003). To

strengthen the representation of this study, I have decided to compare my experiences to a published selection of autobiographical and autoethnographic narratives written by other professionals who have also reflected on the nature of their craft (M. Connolly, personal communication, February 15, 2008).

Stories explore the embodied knowledge of a professional's craft that fill, "the space between fiction and social science, joining ethnographic and literary writing, and autobiographical and sociological understanding" (Ellis, 1993, p. 711), producing "evocative stories that create the effect of reality" (Ellis, 1999, p. 669). It provides a form of scholarly writing that allows me to take on the role of a storyteller and show rather than tell about the experiences I have had like the burning lungs I felt as a competitive swimmer or the rush of a flying down a hill on my mountain bike (McCarville, 2007; Parrot, 2003; Potter & Henderson, 2001; Sparkes, 2003; Tiihonen, 2003).

Potter and Henderson (2004) define Canadian outdoor educators as storytellers. This fulfills a fundamental human need for using language. According to Henderson (2005), as humans we define ourselves and learn best through stories. Stories are a part of our everyday conversation where ordinary people, "describe a sequence of events in a particular time and place, and they also permit other participants to share in the events and to respond to them" (Amor, 2002, p. 235). Stories also provide frames for us to develop our schema, transforming the chaos from our sensory experiences into orderly sequenced narratives (Amor). In turn, stories developed through travel experiences, such as hiking trips or outdoor activities (e.g. fire building), are where we tap the spirit of adventure by expressing our connection with the land as expressions of the experiences we have learned (Potter & Henderson, 2001). Stories form an important component of

the language used in outdoor education that provides a personal space for thought and reflection to alleviate the stressors associated with urban lifestyles and embody the lessons learned that will transfer back to our urban lives (Fine, 2005). This allows practitioners the opportunity to share their reflections from practice and add their personal perspectives to the academic discourse serving outdoor education (Henderson, 2005).

This personal narrative also encourages a dialogue that shows how I, as a researcher and subject, have changed over time as I strive to make meaning of my experience (Ellis & Bochner, 2003; Prince, 2006). This has been done by, “positioning myself reflexively as both narrator (author) and main character of the story. I assume that some experiences can be understood only when feelings are a significant part of the research process” (Ellis, 1993, p. 724). My goal, then, is to reposition readers to the authors of social science and outdoor education, “by acknowledging potential for optional readings and encouraging readers to “experience an experience” that can reveal not only how it was for me, but how it could be or once was for them” (Ellis, 1993, p. 711).

Strengths of Autoethnography

Markula (2003), Sparkes (2003), and Tiihonen (2003) argue that autoethnography allows researchers to write about their experience, rather than writing about a research study examining the same experience. This is what I did as a novice researcher because experience is what captures an audience and gets them attached to a set of narrated events and *rouses* itself to life. “In this way, writers not only stage events but often suggest how those events are to be acted, how they should be pitched, and how they should be voiced”

(Tiihonen, 2003, p. 82). Instead of appealing to a theoretical frame, I have activated this information through a story and moved away from abstracting this work to fit an outside theory (Bochner, 2000; Sparkes, 2002, 2003).

Stories about lived experience expand the domains of disciplinary knowledge (Sparkes, 2007). While traditional academic writing conveys what the researcher believes is an effective portrayal of objective facts (Charmaz, 2006), autoethnographic writing conveys the meanings attached to the experience (Ellis, 1999). As Ellis (1999) explains in an autoethnographic narrative she wrote about an ongoing discussion between herself and a prospective graduate student,

you'd want to tell a story that readers could enter and feel a part of. You'd write in a way to evoke readers to feel and think about your life and their lives in relation to yours. You'd want them to experience the experience you're writing about. (p. 674)

By writing about the meaning of an experience, like the concern I feel as an educator that Ontario-based outdoor education may be losing its philosophical ideals and narrowing its focus in the pursuit of wealth instead of education, I am adding a dimension to the literature: an insider's perspective on how my experience as an outdoor educator is being affected by this realization. I hope to provide introspective insight into how this phenomenon studied by other academic authors, such as Andrews (2003), Loynes (1998), and Brookes (2002), is affecting the disciplinary field of outdoor education. It is through these words that I have been able to externalize these personal thoughts and critically reflect on this experience about writing about autoethnography (Holt, 2001). I recognize that it is one way professionals can participate in academic research by sharing insights

from their personal experiences working in the field. It is in this way that autoethnographic writing strengthens and contributes to the academic study of a discipline such as outdoor education.

The Credibility of Autoethnography

Looking at the bigger picture then, in the face of adversity it is the words of scholars such as Bochner, Ellis, Ronai, Richardson, Sparks, and Holt that have encouraged me to share this personal story. I do not want to devalue theory by exploring a gap between scholars and practitioners because this study is not about a gap between theory and practice. Instead, I merely want to show how this turn of events I have come to realize within my professional practice is relevant to life and how life embodies it (Markula, 2003; Sparkes, 2003). Autoethnography is just another vehicle that researchers can use to explore topics that are not revealed through objective research methods. It is, “not a process imbued with magical properties” (Sparkes, 2003, p. 72). This is simply a different means for writing research, “shifting from typical social science telling mode to literary showing mode” (Tiihonen, 2003, p. 83).

For it is largely through showing that writing gets its power and holds readers' attention. Thus, in an effort to create vital texts, autoethnographers must consider showing real people in action, and through those actions the issues of their story should become clear as ideas and positions are tested, and we come away with a definite impression of meaning. This technique can be employed through various writing genres. For example, short stories, essays, or more dialogical texts.

(Tiihonen, 2003, p. 83)

This means that this study was written in plain language, using writing techniques, such as *inflection*, to go beyond words and capture the hidden meaning of my experience (Parrott, 2003). This is a literary tool that assisted me in expressing my mood, emotions, tone, and personal feelings throughout my writing instead of writing using an objective, passive voice that generalizes to a rational world. Through the writing of Richardson (2000) and insights from my own experiences, I am more convinced of a world that is never wholly rational (M. Connolly, personal communication, March 26, 2008). This technique assists me in drawing readers into my story and making it seem real (Ellis, 1993; Parrott, 2003).

Inflection involves using strategic tools that subtly direct readers to the author's meanings *such as formatting words in italics* (Parrot, 2003). Another tool is changing the pace of the writing, using short words to speed up the pace (Parrott). Injecting emotion is a third tool that can be used to make a *heartwarming* connection with readers (Parrott). Thus, as a researcher implementing an autoethnographic methodology, it has been my job to go beyond the words of theory and represent my personal experiences (Parrott). I also wound my words with thick description of my lived experience using dense and detailed narratives to show what happened during this experience (Ellis, 1993; Patton, 2002). Ellis (2004), Sparks (2003), and Holt (2003) argue that the upcoming story will be valid if it evokes feelings in the reader that are authentic and believable, acknowledging the potential for this research to offer a catalyst for individual and collective change.

Coda B: Notes from My Thesis Defense

The following information has been provided to summarize the preceding writing as addressed at my thesis defense. It has been included here to illustrate to readers, in point form, the key issues that the following pages addressed.

- What is Autoethnography
 - *Autoethnography* is a methodology that begins with the researcher as a cultural insider. Implementing a storytelling approach, it elicits a relationship between the audience and the research, encouraging readers to apply the story to their experiences, *provoking reflective knowledge development* (Ellis, 2004).
 - As Patton (2002) describes, autoethnography allows me as a researcher to ask myself: *how does my own experience of this culture connect with and offer insights about this way of life?*
- Autoethnography: Limitations
 - As a research methodology autoethnography is *often misunderstood* by the dominant epistemology of *the academy* (Foster, McAllister & O'Brien, 2006). But beyond this misunderstanding, the real limitations of autoethnography lay in its subjective nature (Foster et al., 2006)¹.
 - It requires researchers who are, “prepared to write and publish autobiographic work that calls for the writer to possess sufficient courage to reveal what is usually kept private and bring it into a public arena” (Foster et al., 2006, p. 49).

- It relies on self disclosure of its researchers' biased perceptions about the experience under investigation and requires them to write honestly (Ellis, 2004; Foster et al., 2006).
- From this perspective, the key concern of autoethnographers is that they may not allow their biases to be completely exposed (Ellis, 2004).
- This is a concern of mine because I feel I may not have been successful in justifying the subjective basis of my autoethnography (M. Connolly, personal communication, March 26, 2008)
- Further helpful characteristics...
 - Ellis (1999) argues that research is, "always a story about the past, and that's really all field notes are: one selective story about what happened written from a particular point of view at a particular point in time for a particular purpose. But if representation is your goal, it's best to have as many sources and levels of story recorded at different times as possible" (p. 673).
 - I have choose to situate my scholarly knowledge in the subjective accounts of stories from my life (Ellis & Bochner, 2003),
 - To strengthen the representation of this study, I have decided to compare my experiences to a published selection of autoethnographic narratives written by other professionals who have also reflected on the nature of their craft (M. Connolly, personal communication, February 15, 2008).

- Ingredients in an autoethnography: an incomplete yet hopeful list...
 - Keep a reflective journal
 - Take special note of critical incidents and what makes them critical (Brenner, 1991).
 - Relate journal to theories and commentaries from the discipline
 - Stay oriented to the focus (ie, be attuned to real world illustrations and demonstrations of my topic of interest, van Manen, 1996)
 - No narrative smoothing (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990)

Chapter Four: Methods and Analysis

When I was constructing the design for this autoethnography, I wanted to ensure that my qualitative study would be credible to my readers. One way qualitative researchers can accomplish this is to triangulate three different sources of data and use three different methods to analyze these data sources (Cutcliffe & McKenna, 1998; Patton, 2002). So, I decided to do this as a means of uncovering the ingredients that I would use to construct my autoethnographic narrative. Thinking about this process, I reassured myself that this was a good way to approach this project remembering that Connelly and Clandinin (1990) state that narratives need scenes, plots, times, and places. Richardson (1990) and Ronai (1995, 1998) describe this as a collection of facts, or, as I describe it, a collection of ingredients. I decided to first collect information from a reflective journal I had kept while in practice as an outdoor educator. At the recommendation of my supervisor, I then decided to link my narrative to the narratives of three other educators' published narratives (M. Connolly, personal communication, February 14, 2008). I then decided for my third data source to perform a historical review about outdoor education as it has been addressed in Ontario newspapers. This process provided me with the raw ingredients to frame the lived experiences that have led me to this point in my career where I refer to myself as an outdoor educator.

Keeping a Reflective Journal

To capture my thoughts as an outdoor educator and reflect on them while working at YMCA Cedar Glen, I kept a reflective journal as a way to personally explore the ideas and beliefs that guided my professional practice (Caspell, 2006; Levin et al., 2005; Parkay et al., 2005). I consider this an aspect of good practice. Therefore, I did not do this primarily for the purpose of collecting data for this research project, but as an additional tool, as Caspell describes, that I could use to ensure my ideas and beliefs about my practice were in line with the programs I was delivering. This is because, as an educator, I believe my life is shaped by my situated experiences and defined by aspects of my life such as my gender, nationality, education, and social class (Ellis, 1999; Michelson, 1996). To accomplish this, I chose to use the same theoretical model as Holt (2001) did for his autoethnography about his postsecondary teaching practice. This required me to reflect on my practice as an employee at YMCA Cedar Glen and use a method called sociological introspection that Ellis (2004) describes, where I emotionally recalled moments from my personal experiences for the purpose of writing a visceral account of those experiences.

Holt's (2001) model is made up of three levels that allow practitioners to reflect first about the actual events, and then extrapolate their understandings to wider cultural systems. The first level explores *technical reflections* where I reflected on my immediate practice at work such as the effective design of plans, suitability of decisions, and dealing with disruptions (Holt, 2001, p. 68). In this case, technical reflection refers to the common knowledge I use and its links to basic organizational principles (Van Manen, 1977). An example of an organization principle is the mission statement of the Greater

Toronto YMCA that states, “The YMCA is a charity offering opportunities for personal growth through participation and service to the community” (YMCA, 2001, p. 1 of 1).

For the second level, I explored the *meanings underlying practices* concerning the influence of my actions, and the behavior of my peers and clients (Holt, 2001). At this level, I reflected on my interpretive understanding of the nature and quality of the educational experience when making practical choices (Van Manen, 1977). For example, Holt (2001) reflected that his choice of marking criteria was subjectively based on decisions that made his experience as a university teaching assistant easier. In similar circumstances, as an employee of the YMCA, I acted in accordance with their six core values: inclusiveness; health; responsibility; respect; caring; and honesty (YMCA, 2001). However, from personal experience I know this does not always happen, especially when employees were tired or clients were cranky. This level in Holt’s (2001) model allowed me to explore the duality of these experiences.

The third level explored the *political aspects of being a program associate* (Holt, 2001). This is where I reflected on the wider issues of the day such as the moral, ethical, and political aspects of my actions (Holt, 2001). This is where I reflexively critiqued the truth of my knowledge and social conditions that comprised the culture surrounding my experience. For example, this included the social and physical environments of the YMCA, or my experiences at other organizations, where I also acted as an outdoor educator. This allowed me to critique my technical decisions and the underlying meanings of those decisions from a philosophic perspective as an educational practitioner.

This reflective journal was then written on a computer using my Brock University e-mail account and stored first online, later being converted to PDF files which I saved on two UBS keys. In practice, this served as a way to encourage me to reflect on the moral and ethical implications embedded within my daily practice (Larrivee, 2000). Using this reflective framework allowed me to understand the dynamic social environment of my practice and enabled me to discern on a regular basis whether my actions were compatible with my educational philosophy (Caspell, 2006). It allowed me to make changes in my behavior so that I could better support myself, my peers, and serve my clients.

Other Authors' Narratives and Newspaper Reports

Next, at the recommendation of my thesis supervisor, I also examined the narratives of three other outdoor educators (M. Connolly, personal communication, February 14, 2008). I choose narratives by Michael Elrick, Simon Beames, and Lou Preston. Michael Elrick's (2007) narrative was drawn from his article titled: *Dwelling where I teach: Connections with Friluftsliv* published in the book *Nature first: Outdoor life the Friluftsliv way*. Simon Beames' (2006) narrative was drawn from his article titled: *Losing my religion: The quest for applicable theory in outdoor education* published in *Pathways: The Ontario Journal of Outdoor Education*. Lou Preston's (2004) narrative was drawn from her article: *Making connections with nature: Bridging the theory-practice gap in outdoor and environmental education* published in the *Australian Journal of Outdoor Education*. I choose these narratives because their accounts were similar to my own, reflecting how their personal educational philosophies

defined their educational craft. This provided another layer of data that allowed me to widen the perspective of my study beyond my partial and situated narrative, broadening the scope of this thesis, and transforming it into an investigation about the educational craft of a group of outdoor educators.

Finally, I constructed a historical narrative about the state of outdoor education within Ontario through an electronic database search of Ontario newspapers and some relevant literature sources that had been published over the period of my life as both an outdoor education student and practitioner. This source of data served as additional information that assisted in framing my story in the wider context of my background as an Ontarian, illustrating how popular culture has viewed outdoor education within Ontario throughout my lived experience (M. Connolly, personal communication, March 14, 2008). I used these three sources of data: (a) my reflective journal, (b) other educator's narratives, and (c) a historical construction of popular culture's view about Ontario-based outdoor education. I realized at the time I had the raw ingredients (data) for a rigorous analysis that would enable me to construct an autoethnography about this phenomenon, improving my own practice and demonstrating to others how reflective practice as a form of research can help improve a practitioner's understanding of his craft.

Exit Strategy and Processing My Collected Narratives

Upon completion of my contract on August 30, 2007, I withdrew from the field to write this thesis and analyze my reflective journal entries. This correlated with a natural process that my peers and I have gone through many times before at YMCA Cedar Glen where my seasonal contract has ended and I decided to go abroad from the outdoor centre to pursue my educational studies. As I wrote my autoethnography, I attempted to keep in contact with my colleagues at YMCA Cedar Glen about my study. However, as time went on, several of my colleagues left the centre to pursue their own career aspirations and contact was lost. However, this did not affect the results of this thesis because this study was not about them, but about my own personal educational philosophy. So, I continued to pursue my analysis. To analyze my data, I decided to code it by hand. This was a difficult decision for me to make, especially with the popularity of using a computer. However, due to the closeness that autoethnographic research requires, I decided to code my data by hand so that I can be closer to my “data and have a hands-on feel for it without the intrusion of a machine” (Creswell, 2008, p. 247).

Content Analysis

Beginning my analysis, I analyzed the narratives of myself and the other authors using an open coding process. I looked at the similarities in the narratives based on my research questions to identify the key people, places, artifacts, and events that influenced my craft and the craft of the other outdoor educators. These components are what my thesis supervisor, Maureen Connolly, described as the vital ingredients in a story and was

the reason I decided to choose these headings (M. Connolly, personal communication, March 14, 2008). As Ayres, Kavanaugh, and Knafl (2003) describe, I immersed myself in the data and reviewed all of the written narratives to acquire a feeling for the experiences amongst myself and the other authors. I then returned to each author's account to identify significant statements, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs that related directly to the phenomenon under study. These four elements enabled me to begin considering the shape my autoethnography would take. Through this process, I analyzed by hand hardcopies of my reflective journal entries and photocopies of the other narratives using four coloured highlighters to identify these vital ingredients. Next, I placed these ingredients in a set of tables in relation to my research questions. Following that, I conducted a focused coding process where I analyzed these ingredients by each research question in relation to Holt's (2001) tri-level model, addressing the technical, meaning, and political levels. I then organized this data into a large data set identified first by research question, then by tri-level, and followed, finally, by story ingredients.

After finishing my focused coding process, I moved to the next stage of my analysis. At the advice of my supervisor, I began what she called a within-case analysis of each narrative (M. Connolly, personal communication, September 3, 2008). This drew, as I learned, on analytical methods often used in case-study and phenomenological studies. At this stage I began using what Ayres et al. (2003) describe as a hermeneutic spiral where I moved back and forth in cycles between the data sets created through my open coding process and my large data set created through my focused coding process. For each narrative, I designed a set of tables organized first by research question and next by tri-level that identified four to five descriptors for each section of my large data set.

This provided me with a set of tables that I could use to reference my raw data more efficiently during the next stage of my analysis.

At the recommendation of my supervisor, I then conducted an across-case analysis (M. Connolly, personal communication, September 23, 2008). As Ayres et al. (2003) describe, an across-case analysis compares common statements across all the narratives for the purpose of identifying common themes from the variety of different narratives under investigation. But, before doing so, I discussed with my supervisor an emergent pattern I was beginning to see in the data. I acknowledged that it seemed that each author was in a different stage of understanding their personal educational philosophy. I myself was just beginning to investigate my educational philosophy. Beames and Preston were in different stages of developing and testing their educational philosophies, while Elrick had a fairly grounded sense of his own. Sharing this with my supervisor, she recommended that I organize my across-case analysis by this pattern (M. Connolly, personal communication, September 23, 2008).

This involved creating three sets of tables for each narrative organized first by comparing two of my six research questions together and next by tri-levels. The purpose for this was to reduce my six research questions to three (M. Connolly, personal communication, September 23, 2008). Neuman and Robson (2009) describe this as a common practice in qualitative research that allows researchers to further focus the investigation of the phenomenon under study. This involved combining the question: *What do I do as an outdoor educator?*, with the question: *as an outdoor educator what is my educational philosophy?* This transformed into the question: *How does what I do as an outdoor educator shape my educational philosophy?* Next I combined the question:

What drives my actions in the field?, with the question: *What influences me?* This transformed into the question: *What influences drive my actions in the field?* Finally, I combined the question: *how can I improve my craft?*, with the question: *How can reflective practice as a form of research improve practitioners' understanding of their craft?* This transformed into the question: *how can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioner's craft?*

Then, I again implemented the hermeneutic spiral moving between reviewing the raw data organized in my large data set with the descriptors I assigned during my within-case analysis. Through this process, I compared descriptors from each new question within my own narrative to come up with a new set of four to five descriptors for each tri-level (Appendix A). I then conducted the same process with Beames' and Preston's data sets, but compiled that data together into a set of tables due to the shorter lengths of these narratives (Appendix B). Next, I conducted an across-case analysis comparing the new descriptors I created from the compiled table of Beames and Preston with the new descriptors from the across-case analysis of my own narrative. Through this process, I came up with four to five new descriptors for each tri-level organized by each new research question in a combined table reflecting Beames, Preston, and my narratives (Appendix C). Then, I conducted an across-case analysis of Elrick's data following the same procedure I did for my own narrative (Appendix D). Following this, I compared those descriptors to the descriptors from the combined table of Beames, Preston, and my own narratives to come up with a complete across-case analysis of all four narratives (Appendix E).

Speaking with my supervisor about these new tables, she recommended that I decide on four to five headings that I could identify across all three questions (M. Connolly, personal communication, September 30, 2008). These descriptors would be used as chapter headings for my autoethnography. My supervisor recommended four possible headings: The Shock of the Quiet; Outside the Bun; Wherever You Go There You Are; and Stories are Powerful. I recommended the heading: Community or Competition. So again, I returned to conduct a final across-case analysis. I implemented the hermeneutic spiral to move back and forth in cycles between the raw data of the narratives and the final descriptors under development. In the end, I settled on the descriptors: *The Shock of the Quiet*; *Thinking Outside of the Bun*; and *Wherever You Go There You Are, so Remember Stories are Powerful* (Appendix F).

Writing the Autoethnography

With these four headings I began to construct my autoethnography, which I decided would be comprised of three shorter creative stories identified by each heading. During this process I again implemented the hermeneutic spiral, moving back and forth in cycles between the raw data of each author and the headings I would use. To accomplish this, I used the large matrix I had created through my content analysis as a map to search my large data set to identify excerpts that could be used to construct each story. During this process I extracted pertinent excerpts from the raw data and organized them into story ingredient studies for each tri-level organized by people, places, artifacts, and events. I then used these story ingredient studies as resources to identify key excerpts that I could use to construct my short stories. For example, for the story *Thinking*

Outside the Bun I drew on the data from all the authors at the technical level to develop a technical level story outline, followed with a meaning and political level outline that was combined with the previous levels. This contextualized the first part of my layered account in the development of these stories. As I continued to construct these stories, I was presented with a problem because some story outlines had more useable data in the meaning and political levels for an effective plot. So, I began to organize the excerpts in a spontaneous and intuitive fashion. Because of this process, as I wrote each story I initially kept the headings for each excerpt so that I had a reference from where my story components had originated. When each story was complete, I eliminated the headings and combined the data into a cohesive story using creative writing to ensure that the story followed in a consistent manner from each data excerpt to the next. During this process I also changed the references I had made for people included in my reflective journal entries and used creative writing tools (e.g. inflection and repetition) to make these stories more interesting.

Next, I decided to organize my stories around the fictional setting of a campfire occurring at an academic conference in the field of outdoor education. I decided that four characters (one being me) would be the tellers of these stories and then discuss relevant academic literature to critique key examples from these stories. This meant I was creating another story that would be framed around my short stories. I decided on the *setting* of a campfire because this is a traditional *setting* I have often shared creative stories in as a facilitator of this type of experience in outdoor education programs. I decided to situate the campfire at an academic conference in the field of outdoor

education because this would be a more credible setting where campfire participants would be knowledgeable about academic literature supporting this field.

However, this presented a problem related to the academic format most papers are supposed to be written in for my graduate program (APA Style, 5th edition). Because I would be writing dialogue that would be incorporating information from relevant literature, sticking strictly to an APA format would have misrepresented the nature of how people talk. Ellis (2004) argues that as human beings we do not often speak in citations. So, I decided to use footnotes to cite the sources I was using while crafting my dialogues. When using direct quotes, because I was already using quotations to show when my characters were talking, I decided to italicize these excerpts, including the page number in the footnoted citation. Moving on from that dilemma, I decided to keep the names of my characters the same as the authors I was drawing my data from so that my readers could easily recognize where the influences for the critiques were derived and guided from.

Further, I decided to construct the critical dialogue about each story using a method called *fiction critical writing*. Fiction critical writing is a method of inquiry where the authorship of fiction is used as a method of professional reflection to investigate and illuminate issues of practice that are not apparent to the author at a conscious level in his or her daily practice. It engages the writer in a critique of his or her own stories (or the stories of others) to develop and clarify the author's understanding of his or her data. It draws out issues, gaps, and queries to extending the learning process for the author and other practitioners (Bolton, 1994; Winter, 1989). Winter argues that fictional critical writing is a process of criticism that is similar to literary criticism.

However, unlike most critical processes that are concerned with *value* judgments, the fictional critical process instead is concerned with making *explicit* the meanings an authored story partly embodies and conceals. For me this involved engaging with my autoethnographic short stories first as an author, then as a reader, and then as a critic. To accomplish this, I decided to use excerpts of data from the other authors narratives to guide and influence the construction of each critical dialogue. This allowed me to show, rather than tell, how the ideas I discovered within my stories illustrated the phenomenon under study.

I then constructed another story using my secondary historical analysis of Ontario newspapers in the context of an academic research presentation at the academic conference. This story was created for two purposes: first to provide background material to historically situate the context of how the current practices illustrated in my short stories has come to be; and, second, to establish the context that the campfire discussions were occurring in an academic environment. This made it more credible for my four characters to engage in a deeper discussion about the phenomenon under study.

Justifying my use of this tradition, it is important to again re-emphasize that Potter and Henderson (2001) refer to Canadian outdoor educators as storytellers. So, this autoethnography has been written in the form of a narrative about my experiences as outdoor educator and how they relate to other practitioner's narratives exploring similar themes uncovered through my data analysis (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). This methodological approach has allowed me a creative avenue to answer the following research questions: *How does what I do as an outdoor educator shape my educational*

philosophy? What influences drive my actions in the field? How can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioner's craft?

Strong Word Analysis

After constructing my autoethnographic short stories, I conducted a strong word analysis (M. Connolly, personal communication, March 14, 2008). This is a form of discursive analysis that looks at the etymology of key words embedded within my autoethnography. Van Manen (1998) argues, "The first thing that often strikes us about any phenomenon is that the words we use to refer to the phenomenon have lost some of their original meaning" (p. 58). Often times fashionable words become eroded from the cultural context of where they were derived (Van Manen, 1999). One example Van Manen (1999) explores is the word *pedagogy*.

In education, fashion words often get formally sanctioned by certain major figures in the education power hierarchy after the term has already functioned in the progressive, creative, but still marginal labours of the less influential, less well-connected scholars. This is the reality of the 'sociology of research' that is rarely acknowledged in critical studies. Just as in the designer fashion industry, ideas from street culture sometimes get picked up and formally introduced to the fashion world, so the term pedagogy has become appropriated by the research leadership – but ironically sometimes for non-pedagogical reasons. (p. 15)

For these reasons, Van Manen (1998) emphasizes that it is important to understand the core or root of phenomenal words. These types of words are what Connolly (personal communication, March 14, 2008) refers to as *strong words*. "Being attentive to the

etymological origins of words may sometimes put us in touch with an original form of life where the terms still had living ties to the lived experiences from which they originally sprang” (Van Manen, 1998, p. 59). They, “can help us orient to the semantic variations and the meanings of possible human experiences” (Van Manen, 2002, p. 268). Van Manen (2002) used such analysis to trace the origins of the word *caring*, as a concept central to North American health science and, in particular, nursing. Van Manen (2002) conducted this research because he argues that little attention has been paid to the use of the word caring in the culture of health sciences. He argues that a deeper understanding of how the word is and has been used beyond North American culture provides background understanding to the root meaning of the word so that practitioners can use the term more appropriately.

Brookes (2004, 2006) makes a similar argument in regards to the term *outdoor education*. Brookes (2006) argues that tensions arise around terms like *outdoor education* when,

outdoor education may be partly or wholly sub-contracted to an outside organization, either commercial or non-profit. Examples include Outward Bound Inc., and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme (which does not actually run programs, but supports them), and in Australia the Outdoor Activities Group, which tend to construct their own definitions-in-practice of outdoor education. (p. 12-13).

With the multiplicity of meanings that can be attached to terms like *outdoor education* or words like *caring* or *pedagogy* it is important to understand their roots to provide a contextual grounding for their use within my autoethnography.

This entailed a selective discourse analysis where I identified key words used in my constructed narratives, words or terms that seem revealing or essential to the culture and phenomenon being studied (Van Manen, 1998). Then, I isolated those words and analyzed the etymological meaning attached to those words using select etymological dictionaries. I then layered these meanings into the constructed dialogues surrounding my four stories by constructing my character as someone interested in the origins of words. This allowed me to provide the root or original meaning of these words so that I could contrast how they are used in my own autoethnographic narrative with what they originally meant. Through this method, I felt I was able to expose and justify some of the presumed biases of autoethnography and build a stronger elicitation between my readers and my text.

Layering the Accounts

This overall autoethnography was constructed using the writing method of a layered account (Jago, 1996; Ronai, 1995, 1998). That allowed me to integrate the situated knowledge of my living theories with those related to the other practitioners' narratives, my historical review of newspapers, and my strong word analysis. This layered account was written from my perspective as an outdoor educator, but used the metaphor of my divided self as both an outdoor educator and graduate student (Bochner, 1997). When constructing this narrative as author, I needed to be aware of these multiple I's that comprised my characters within this divided narrative (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006; Whitehead, 2000). Therefore, even though I was writing from the perspective of an outdoor educator, I also regularly acknowledge the two perspectives of

my divided self: as a graduate student and as an outdoor educator (Bochner, 1997; Lerum, 2001). From here this narrative was to be used to illustrate my educational philosophy as an outdoor educator, address the implications in my own practice and the implications for higher education which contributes to the training of outdoor educators, and educators in general.

This meant that this narrative could not have a happy ending. Connelly and Clandinin (1990, 2006) refer to this process as narrative smoothing when the narrative finishes in a happy ending. To offset this and allow for readers to draw their own conclusions about this study, I ended my narrative as Ellis (2004) did to conclude her methodological novel about autoethnography where she shared the insights that she had learned about writing an autoethnography. I decided to summarize my findings in a final chapter discussing (a) what I learned about my educational philosophy, (b) what was gained through the process of writing an autoethnography, and (c) how reflective practice has assisted me as a practitioner and researcher in enhancing my understanding about the field of my craft: outdoor education. By sharing my story about the introspective journey I have undergone in writing this autoethnography, I am providing readers with a conclusion to my journey, but not theirs. This, then, encourages readers to draw their own conclusions about this story, and how it is related to their lives. How the knowledge contained in this document can compel them to begin reflecting on their own field, practice, and craftsmanship as a researcher or practitioner (Ellis & Bochner, 2003, 2006).

Credibility and Ethics

In all honesty, by relying on this creative analytic practice to compel other researchers and practitioners to begin reflecting and writing about their own practices, this study has raised some serious concerns for myself regarding how I justify the credibility of this autoethnography (Bochner, 1997; Duncan, 2004; Ellis, 1999, 2007; Havitz, 2007; Holt, 2003; Parry & Johnson, 2007; Prince, 2006). In relation to this form of inquiry, it is highly problematic and even nonsensical to evaluate this study using positivistic or post-positivistic social science criteria (Collinson & Hockey, 2005). However, recent attempts have been made to reconceptualize positivistic criteria, such as generalization, validity, and reliability, in relation to qualitative methods for the purpose of contextualizing a common language amongst researchers (Sparkes, 1998). I support this process because I feel that it adds a level of conceptualization to the trustworthiness of this proposal's research design so that the results from autoethnographic and other narrative research formats can be more effective in supporting the diversity of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Thus, I argue that by exploring these issues autoethnographers have the potential to construct a language that is complimentary to other scientific conventions that will strengthen the credibility of this work.

Therefore, the case where generalization relates¹ to the degree to which the data from this study can be generalized beyond the specific population (*me*) to the general population is impossible (Collinson & Hockey, 2005, p. 195). Prince (2006) supports this statement indicating that the purpose of her autoethnography is to show only her reality because there is rarely any agreement on what constitutes reality.

My goal is that my readers will then take my experiences and assimilate the meaning into their own lives and find some importance in the information. The burden of generalization therefore lies within the reader's interpretations as they create meaning for themselves. (Prince, 2006, p. 43)

Schön (1983) supports this statement stating that reflective studies "may be generalized to other cases, not by giving rise to general principles, but by contributing to the practitioner's repertoire of exemplary themes from which, in subsequent cases of his practice, he may oppose new variations" (p. 140).

In the case of validity pertaining "to whether a measure or operational definition actually relates to the concept that it is claimed to examine" (Collinson & Hockey, 2005, p. 195), again it is difficult to operationally define personal experiences as they constantly change. However, Ellis and Bochner (2003, 2006) state that narratives are valid if they evoke a feeling of the experience expressed in the author's work. Sheppard (1998) describes this as practice validity, which states that research is valid if it is applicable to the nature of a person's professional practice. Prince (2006) expands on this further indicating, "knowing full well that personal narratives present validity issues and in order to enhance the trustworthiness of my research, I've included a clear description of my collected data and the methodical manner of coding and interpretation of the data" (p. 43). Therefore, I have followed her example and done the same as explained in previous sections of this chapter. In addition, Prince indicates that it is also up to her readers to decide if her research is valid because "it is within the reach of all readers to realize how my experiences can in fact relate to, and impact their life journeys" (p. 43).

Finally, in the case of reliability referring, “to the consistency of a measure” (Collinson & Hockey, 2005, p. 195), it is difficult to measure a narrative. However, with the triangulation of my three data sources, these sources of data demonstrate the reliable nature of the narrative I have created (Sparkes, 1998). In addition, by actively critiquing the data in my autoethnographic stories using the method of fiction critical writing has added another layer of depth to my story by illustrating how other academics could potentially react to the reliability of my story in relation to their own lives as both students and practitioners of an educational craft. In addition, I decided to incorporate personal communications from my thesis supervisor during the process of writing this autoethnography to provide additional scaffolding to illustrate this qualitative definition of reliability.

Understanding the importance of expressing how research criteria (e.g. generalization, validity and reliability) applies to this thesis, nurtures a dialogue between all researchers (Sparkes, 1998). It is important for me, as a researcher, to express how these three criteria apply to my research so that this autoethnography has the potential to reach a wide academic audience. In turn, this will increase the understanding between more traditional researchers and autoethnographers as to how these methodologies can compliment each other and enhance a body of existing knowledge. In considering how these three criteria impact my work, I must also explore the ethical nature of this study. Currently, there is limited reference made in autoethnographic literature that indicates the ethical implications of autoethnography. In fact, Prince (2006) is one of the few people who provide a clear definition of the ethical implications of constructing an autoethnography. Prince states:

I have discovered ethics equally important in autoethnography. Since ethnographic research takes place among real human beings, the researcher must take care to obtain consent when necessary and not exploit or harm those involved. . . In autoethnography, the study is about the researcher in a cultural setting that may include the influences of other people, events and places. It is not the study of others, but does include their influence on the life of the researcher. (p. 44).

Therefore, in consideration of this point, Ellis (2007) recommends that researchers change the names of the people in autoethnographic studies to ensure their anonymity. However, Prince argues that it may still be possible that people recognize components of the narrative as scenes from their lives. Therefore, I have made it clear that this research has been conducted to answer my research questions: *How does what I do as an outdoor educator shape my educational philosophy? What influences drive my actions in the field? How can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioner's craft?*

Therefore, I agree with Prince's (2006) description of the ethical nature of autoethnographic work. I emphasize this is not a study about the staff, clients, or communities connected to YMCA Cedar Glen. It is a study of my role as a practitioner working in the field of outdoor education and how my¹ experiences are connected to the larger field of outdoor education across the globe. The events I will now share in the following chapters will be from my personal narratives and have been selected based on the impact they have had on my practice (Prince).

In conclusion, by researching and understanding the ideas and beliefs that guide my professional practice, I will now present an academic example of an outdoor

educator's personal educational philosophy. This will be written in the form of an autoethnography for the purpose of constructing a story that demonstrates how my living theories embedded in my practice contextualize my educational philosophy as an outdoor educator (Bochner, 1997; Brew, 1993; Lerum, 2001). This draws on an epistemology of living theory, situated from my "particular point of view at a particular point in time for a particular purpose" (Ellis, 1999, p. 673). By sharing this story with you, I hope to encourage other outdoor educators and practitioners to share their ideas and beliefs that guide their professional behaviour (Dana & Yendol-Silva, 2003). By doing so, I intend to show one small way practitioners and academic researchers can move beyond the argument that there is a gap between theory and practice, and, instead, engage in a dialogue that strengthens the practice of their craft: education (Dana & Yendol-Silva; Markula, 2003). I now introduce my autoethnography using the metaphor from the cinema: Welcome to my thesis feature presentation. Sit back, relax, read, and reflect.

Coda C: Notes from My Thesis Defense

The following information has been provided to summarize the preceding writing as addressed at my thesis defense. It has been included here to illustrate to readers, in point form, the key issues that the following pages addressed.

- Data Sources & Analysis
 - My reflective journal I kept as an outdoor educator
 - Organized my journal entries using Holt's (2001) tri-level reflective analysis:
 - Technical level
 - Meaning level
 - Political level
 - Three other outdoor educators' narratives
 - Michael Elrick (2007), *Dwelling where I teach: Connections with Friluftsliv* published in the book *Nature first: Outdoor life the Friluftsliv way*.
 - Simon Beames (2006), *Losing my religion: The quest for applicable theory in outdoor education* published in *Pathways: The Ontario Journal of OE*.
 - Lou Preston (2004), *Making connections with nature: Bridging the theory-practice gap in outdoor and environmental education* published in the *Australian Journal of OE*.
 - Newspaper articles about Ontario-based OE

- based across the 28 years of my life
- Analysis
 - content analysis, secondary analysis, strong word analysis
- Writing
 - *Fictional Critical Writing (FCW): incorporating academic literature.*
 - *Layered account*
- Analysis
 - Content analysis of my reflective journal and other narratives;
 - Within-case analysis: organized key phrases and sentences by:
 - People, places, objects, events (key components of a story)
 - Holt's Tri-Level reflective analysis
 - Then by my six research questions
 - Across-case analysis to code and create conceptual themes;
 - looked across six questions in reflective journal data / *reducing to 3 research questions*;
 - Organized that data by my three research questions and Holt's Tri-level analysis;
 - Looked across Beames' and Preston's data the same way;
 - Looked across the themes from my journal and combined data from Beames and Preston creating new themes;
 - Looked across Elrick's data with the combined data set created in the previous step and created more themes;

- Finally created three central themes which I used as the three titles for the stories told around the campfire
- Indigenous typologies, or *faultlines*, arose from the analysis itself in response to the six original questions.
 - Faultlines: are areas of ideological tension between groups where there exists the potential for a social shift in power (Bone, 2002).
- Analysis
 - Research Questions merged and reduced into three research questions.
 - *How does what I do as an outdoor educator, shape my educational philosophy?*
 - *What influences drive my actions in the field?*
 - *How can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioner's craft?*
- Content Analysis:
 - During the coding process of my content analysis I implemented a *hermeneutic spiral* while creating codes;
 - Result: a large organized raw data set and matrix was crafted;
 - My matrix provided me with a map for organizing how my ethnographic data were crafted
- Secondary Analysis
 - Conducted a historical review of Newspapers articles;

- Created a data-base of excerpts from newspaper articles discussing Ontario OE
- Strong Word Analysis
 - Identified the etymological origin of key words in my data;
 - Used various etymological dictionaries to decipher origins of key words.
- Fictional Critical Writing (FCW)
 - I used fictional critical writing (FCW) to create a fictional discussion between four outdoor educators at an academic conference sharing stories around a campfire.
 - FCW encourages practitioners to write fictional stories to facilitate professional reflection, critique, and consider alternative approaches for their practice.
 - My character presented a academic oral presentation at a fictional OE conference: How OE has historically been framed in Ontario by the news media;
 - My 3 other characters, based on the other outdoor educators' published narratives, shared stories about critical practical incidents around a campfire;
 - each story based primarily on data from my reflective journal;
 - A discussion amongst my four characters was crafted following each story, and constructed based on data from the other outdoor educators' narratives & other academic literature *to guide and critique practical examples* in the *campfire stories*.

- Composed as a Layered Account
- Layered Account:
 - a ethnographic reporting technique, that writers of ethnography use to layer multiple sources of data together into a qualitative story (Ronai, 1995)
 - I employed writing as a method of inquiry (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005)
 - The data I collected focused the way I wrote my study
 - The text I composed was influenced by my biases as its author
 - The purpose of creating the text is to *provoke people to think about what we define as knowledge*
 - In this way, I let my readers determine how my story will be relevant to their lives
- Credibility of This Project
 - Validity (Trustworthiness)
 - Practice Validity: it is valid if the research is applicable to a professional's practice
 - Data triangulation: three sources
 - Triangulation of analysis techniques
 - Ethnographic writing techniques (FCW and Layered Account), add additional angles of data analysis the go beyond triangulation, crystallizing the analysis process (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2006).
 - Reliability (Thick Description)
 - Incorporated thick description of my lived experience using dense and detailed narratives to show what happened (Ellis, 2004; Patton, 2002)

- Incorporated a thick description of my research process: methods, analysis, writing
- My decision to incorporate personal communications from my thesis supervisor to explain the process of analyzing and writing this autoethnography

Chapter Five: A Historical Argument About Ontario-based Outdoor Education

“Thanks for having me here,” I said, standing in front of the podium. Staring back at me were leading scholars and students in the field of outdoor education and outdoor recreation, many of whom I did not know, nor had I read their work. All I could think was, *well, James, you submitted an abstract and paper for this presentation. You know only a few of the names in the crowd. Guess when the chair of the conference said, “Most of the graduate students in the crowd will be pleased to know their entire reference list is here,”¹ he was speaking from the situated context of the States. He wasn’t thinking about me, one of only a few Canadians in the crowd. So let’s go for it, maybe I’ll shake things up a bit.* I took a deep sigh to calm myself.

“Hi, I’m James Borland. I’d just like to point out this is just a little study I did in my spare time, for my own interest. When I submitted it to this conference, I didn’t expect to be accepted for a presentation. So, I’d like to thank the organizers of this event for this opportunity to share my insights. I’ve learned a lot about the historical state of outdoor education in Ontario.” I clicked the mouse for my first slide. Nothing happened. I froze, looking at the crowd.

“Uh . . . sorry folks, technical difficulties.” I said, smiling at the crowd. Rushing up to the front were the presentation organizers. Immediately they began to fiddle with the computer. Nothing happened. They began whispering to each other as the time keeper dropped her cards and approached me.

¹ (A. Young, personal communication, January 11, 2008).

“Don’t worry James, this isn’t your fault. We’ll give you your time to speak. These things happen, no need to freak out.” I scratched my head.

“I’m not freaking out.” I replied. The two chairs stopped and looked at me. That is when I realized that what I had said, I had said very loud. I was not worried. One of the organizers approached me and whispered into my ear.

“What do you mean?” He said. “We can’t get the computer working? You won’t be able to show your slideshow. You’re going to have to wait.”

“Nawh,” I said. “Like my mother, a 40-year veteran teacher, says, every good teacher should have a backup plan. I can present without the show. Anyways, that should give you some time to fiddle with the computer. I’m sure the other people after me need the computer more than I do.”

“O-k-a-y,” said the other chair. I interpreted a sense of uncertainty in his voice.

“No really, don’t worry. I’ll be fine. I planned for computer failure.” Reassured by the confidence in my voice, the two chairs nodded their heads and motioned to my timekeeper.

“Okay James. You’ll have 30 minutes and then a few more for questions. I guess we’ll begin.” I shuffled some papers and started my talk.

1

The Introduction to My Presentation

In 2005, Cameron Smith published an article in the *Toronto Star* reporting about a day he spent with Upper Grand District School Board teacher, Mike Elrick, and his 24 Grade 10 students. Smith quoted Elrick, who wanted to make one point very clear, “This is not outdoor education . . . It’s simply education” (p. H04). According to Elrick, “The

environment isn't something separate from people and from everyday life. It's woven through every piece of existence" (Smith, 2005, p. H04). Smith (2005) described Elrick's teaching as inventive. For example, for their grade 10 Civics credit, students bicycle around Guelph and talk with residents about current issues. Then, they debate these issues in the city's council chamber. Deeper understandings about their urban environment are fostered through activities such as following the trail of municipal water from the water purification plant to where the water is returned to the local river. Elrick argues this program is about giving students a sense they're a part of the community, "that they don't exist in isolation, and they're much more than a piece of the workforce" (Smith, 2005, p. H04). Smith (2005) concluded,

There's a big difference between enjoying nature and feeling a sense of distress over an affront to the environment similar to what you might feel if a close relative had been injured. But that's what Elrick is talking about: a sense that a wetland or a red-shouldered hawk is dear to you, much like a favourite cousin – not for some fuzzy, touchy-feely reason, but because you are biologically connected and your welfare is ultimately linked. It's called an attitudinal change, and we need more of it. (p. H04)

An attitudinal change is what Raffan called for in a 1996 article published in *Pathways: The Ontario Journal of Outdoor Education*. Reflecting at the 25th year anniversary of the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario (C.O.E.O.), Raffan argued there is a myth that outdoor education is something special and separate from classroom teaching. He argues this has created a barrier between outdoor educators and "the concerns of all good teachers?" (p. 11). He supported this claim stating there are

hundreds of teachers in elementary and secondary schools around the province, most not associated with C.O.E.O., who facilitate powerful outdoor education programs from a classroom base. “To these people, going outdoors is just one element in GOOD TEACHING” (Raffan, p. 10). This is supported by Hammerman, Hammerman, 7 Hammerman (2001) who argue, “Many of the techniques that teachers use daily in their indoor classrooms are either adaptable or suitable for study in the outdoor environments. Teachers *need not have* all the answers and should not feel inadequate if they do not” (p. 62). However, Raffan that argues outdoor education in Ontario has been depicted as dying over the last 25 years because,

We outdoor educators did nothing to dispel the impression that outdoor educators had some special magic and that outdoor education had some unique pedagogical aura that was inaccessible to the ordinary classroom teacher – we dressed differently, we spoke differently, we asked kids to call us by our first names. We wanted to be considered part of school, but we wanted to be set apart too. We established programmes that regulated the classroom teacher to the role of babysitter in the evening and the off times, thereby usurping their authenticity and credibility to the specialists’ while at the centre. (p. 9)

In 1972 at the first C.O.E.O. conference, the keynote speaker Thomas Goodale argued “Unless outdoor education and educators throw their energies into creating a habitable urban environment, it is little more than a sop for the critics” (Goodale, 1972, p. 6). Raffan (1996) argues that outdoor education in Ontario has “evolved in an artificial bubble of opulence and optimism” (p. 4). He argues, “the bubble is bursting, exposing us to the more realistic fiscal world without, we must find ways to carry on, before the

dream disappears altogether” (p. 4). Arguing that outdoor education is the concern of all teachers, Raffan asks C.O.E.O. members, “Isn’t it time to take down the terminological fence we have erected around who we are and what we do, time to unite with like-minded souls in education as a whole” (p. 11). Listening to a presentation about eco-tourism by Constance Russell at Brock University, in passing she argued that in Ontario outdoor education is viewed as a frill because of the actions of Ontario’s former Conservative government (personal communication, March 13, 2007). But over my years working with youth at outdoor centres and summer camps, I have learned from my participants that it is easier to blame others than ourselves. I argue it is just as easy to blame the government. So, I asked myself: *Have Ontario outdoor educators made outdoor education a frill? Has this narrative that outdoor education is a frill been created by a faultline between outdoor education specialists and ordinary teachers?* For clarification, faultlines are more than just physical geographic phenomena. Faultlines, as Bone (2005) describes, can also be defined as regional tensions that place pressure on existing social and political systems. The Canadian Oxford Dictionary (2002) defines this idea of faultlines as, “a point where two strongly opposed forces, ideologies, etc. conflict, with the potential for great divisiveness and damage” (p. 541). According to Bone (2005), these areas of tension reflect the potential for political change in the social division of power. So, as I asked before: *Have Ontario outdoor educators made outdoor education a frill?*

The Methods I Used

Looking back to a newspaper article published in 1981 in *The Globe and Mail*, Truman reported the concerns of teacher, Don Colby, the originator of East Northumberland Secondary School's grade 11 outdoor education courses. Colby argued that the problem of keeping the outdoor education course offered at his school was not because of fiscal constraints. For him, the problem was a shift in the educational philosophies of new teachers entering the education system (Truman, 1981). "It's not as easy now to get support for a course that might not be considered something basic," Colby said (Truman, 1981, p. T9). "It's hard to get new teachers who are interested in the program" (p. T9).

Today there is a push by C.O.E.O. to encourage teachers to use the outdoors because most do not (Foster & Linney, 2007). Reflecting on a study written by Nicol (2002a, 2002b, 2003) where he provided an account of the sociohistorical context of outdoor education in Scotland, I decided to provide a sociohistorical account of outdoor education in Ontario. It is important to note, just as Nicol (2002a) wrote, that "I am not setting out to provide a definitive account of the historical development of outdoor education" (p. 29-30). I have decided to keep my first study simple and look at how outdoor education in Ontario has been defined by Ontario newspapers over the past 28 years of my life. In a review of over 40 newspaper articles between the years 1980 to 2008, I wish to show one partial aspect of how outdoor education has been shaped in my culture through the news media.

The 1980s

The origin of the word *outdoors* means open spaces (Harper, 2001), and the origin of the word *educate* means to train or instruct according to an accepted standard (Chambers, 1965). I thought these words would be described in a similar way through my newspaper analysis. However, beginning my analysis in the 1980s, I discovered that outdoor education was not a regular topic reported about. The words *outdoor education* depicted outdoor educators as icons who supported active participation in outdoor pursuits. For example, in a 1980 article published in *The Globe and Mail* by Rife, he reported on Lakehead outdoor education professor, Bruce Hyer's fight to protect a recreation canoeing area referred to as the Whitewater Canoeing Area. *The Globe and Mail* (1981) described outdoor education teacher Jim Gear's opinion that children learn how to do outdoor activities, like downhill skiing, by imitating their parents. In 1988 in *The Globe and Mail* Bob Henderson, a specialist in outdoor education at the School of Physical Education at McMaster University, was interviewed as a participant in an Ontario orienteering event (WILFRED LIST, 1988). What is interesting to note is that these examples depict outdoor educators as iconic participants involved in high intensity outdoor pursuits, instead of as people who teach *in and for* the outdoors.

During this same decade, outdoor education was also depicted as an electoral issue for school trustee candidates, specifically in the Greater Toronto Area. For example, on October 29, 1980, Turner reported in *The Globe and Mail*,

Most candidates running for school trustee posts in the Borough of York are campaigning on the slogan that taxpayers have to get more for their tax dollar

from the education system. Candidates feel many voters are still outraged that the board purchased the Pine River Outdoor Education Centre a few years ago for \$250,000. The centre, which many considered a waste of money, since property taxes hit York residents especially hard. (p. P13)

On November 1, 1988a, in the *Toronto Star*, Lyn Apgar, running for a school trustee position with the Halton School Board, argued for a stronger commitment for the school board's outdoor education centre. November 9, 1988 Dufferin-Peel Catholic School Board Trustee Robert Hall stated his support for "extending outdoor education and a retreat centre for high school students" (Toronto Star, 1988b, p. W9).

Finally, in the 80s outdoor education was also depicted as a specialized aspect of the education system that often needed to be taught in separate facilities from schools. This can be read in Don Colby's concern for his ability to offer a grade 11 outdoor education course at East Northumberland Secondary School. The following year, Truman (1982) reported on a grade one snowshoeing program taught by field technician, Vince Prewer, at the HR Frink Outdoor Education Centre north of Belleville, Ontario. On June 21, 1988, in the *Toronto Star*, Daly reported on nature programs offered at the Scarborough Board of Education's Hillside Outdoor Education Centre. He described the centre as a 1850s one-room schoolhouse operated by the local school board where grade 4 students studied organisms in the Rouge River, like "crayfish, larvae, dragon flies and frogs . . . to teach them what a healthy stream looks like" (p E11), learn a history lesson at the school house, or play the animal food web simulation game: survival.

These three factors describe outdoor education and its facilitators as: (a) specialists who promote outdoor pursuits, (b) outdoor education centres as an election

issue, and (c) a shift in outdoor education as something to be taught at its own facilities. It is clear that during the 1980s the Ontario news media created a narrative that outdoor education was a politically sensitive specialized aspect of education that promoted participation in outdoor pursuits. I argue that this narrative illustrates Raffan's (1996) barrier described in his article and a faultline between outdoor education specialists and ordinary educators.

The Early 90s

This narrative began to change at the turn of the decade. In an article published on February 18, 1989 in the *Toronto Star*, Ainsworth (1989) reported about a North York School Board sponsored environmental education conference held at an outdoor education centre in Orangeville, Ontario. Experts in environmental education and 90 Metro Toronto teachers met "to find ways of helping students protect the environment" (p. A10). Meetings focused on finding fresh ways to apply math, science, and English skills to real world problems. The results of the conference convinced Marguerite Jackson, superintendent of curriculum for the North York School Board, to consider making curriculum changes. The conference illustrated a community desire to provide more hands-on learning connected to real world scenarios taught by teachers in the school system. It is important to note that even though this conference was held at an outdoor education centre, outdoor education was not mentioned as an area where this could occur in the article.

On June 3, 1991, in an article titled *Outdoor Education*, Ainsworth reported in the *Toronto Star* that science teachers were reaching out to real life experiences (e.g. riding

roller coasters at amusement parks) to explain textbook theories, like centrifugal force, to grade 12 physics students. Ainsworth's article reported,

Educators are now convinced that making science hands-on and relevant to young people is the key to boosting enrolment in high school science courses. Fears that too many students were dropping out of science classes prompted an extensive review of the curriculum in 1984. . . New curriculum guidelines now preach relevancy in an effort to sell science to students. (p. B5)

In this article, outdoor education centres were also advocated as facilities that science teachers used to promote the relevance of science in the everyday lives of students. What is interesting to note is that the article is titled *Outdoor Education*, which notes that outdoor education at the time may have been perceived as an area of concern for all educators. However, it is important to note that outdoor education centres were only mentioned as one arena where teachers could promote this need for making science more real and relevant for high school students.

Building on this idea, in the early 1990s outdoor education centres began to be used to promote environmental awareness in high school students. On February 15, 1990 the *Toronto Star* published an article on teacher Rick Carter's environmental awareness program where he took student leaders from Burnhamthorpe Collegiate to the Albion Hills Outdoor Education Centre at the Albion Hill Conservation Authority to learn about garbage. As part of the learning package students visited a local garbage transfer station. According to Carter, students were expected to take their learning back to their school with the hope that students would get more involved in environmental issues.

Interpreting the narrative that science needed to be sold to high school students, it seems

clear that outdoor education centres were becoming a place where teachers assumed students would learn about the *environment* (a monolithic word itself), and assume that students would become independently involved in environmental issues. I argue that this illustrates a disconnect between marketing science courses and actually promoting learning through science. Outdoor education centres were becoming a marketable resource rather than a place to promote direct, hands-on learning opportunities in the natural world.

This pattern began to grow during the early 90s and changed to justify the need for outdoor education centres because urban children lacked contact with nature which promoted a lack of understanding about life beyond them (Westman, 1990). This same narrative was used to justify the opening of a new outdoor education centre, like the J.S. Ryan Centre for Outdoor Education operated by the Frontenac Lennox & Addington Separate School Board, which officially opened with the purpose of “reconnecting students with the natural world, and to develop a keener awareness, appreciation and respect for nature and the environment” (Wolfe, 1990, p. 1). However, these claims are not supported by any proof. This brings into question arguments like Fran Westman’s, who published a letter on March 17, 1990 in the *Toronto Star*, arguing that outdoor education centres are the only venue where students can interact with nature. As Raffan (1996) described, this has created an impression that outdoor education in Ontario is a unique pedagogical area of education that can only occur at specialty centres usually inaccessible “to the ordinary classroom teacher” (p. 9).

Because outdoor education was contextualized as something politically motivated in the 80s and something taught at special facilities in the early 90s, this narrative made it

easier for critics from the mainstream school system to make cuts to outdoor education programs and threaten the jobs of outdoor education teachers when the province went into a recession. In 1991, outdoor education centres operated by the Peel Board of Education were “serviced by two field study centres, eleven teachers and eight support staff and visited by over 20,000 students from Grade K-13.” (Shaw, 1994, p. 11). However, “As the recession began to take its toll on the economy in the 1990’s the Peel Board of Education started to look for ways to reduce its budget. The outdoor education programs came under attack and their future was in jeopardy. The board decided to reduce field centre staff and close the G.W. Finlayson Centre” (Shaw, 1994, p. 11). “A core committee of parents, field centre and classroom teachers was quickly put together. Their aim was to keep the outdoor study experiences at the two field centres available to the students of Peel.” (p. 11). In the end, the committee, exhausting all efforts, “suggested that staff could be reduced but programming maintained by using students from secondary school co-op programs” (p. 13).

On December 14, 1993, *The Ottawa Citizen* reported that the Carleton Board of Education needed to cut \$20 million from its 1994 budget to keep the board’s tax increase to 3% (Mangiacasale, 1993). To accomplish this, a 48-member budget task force including senior administrators, school board trustees, and union representatives proposed eight areas where savings could be made, one of which was outdoor education. The most popular idea was to restructure staffing and use less expensive technicians for libraries and its outdoor education centres instead of qualified teachers. It was recommended that the work year be shortened for these school-based non-teaching staff (Mangiacasale). I argue that these types of concessions, made across the province,

reduced the quality of outdoor education because of the lack of teachers in outdoor education. I argue that because many outdoor educators often distinguished themselves as specialists operating outside of schools, this made it easier for school trustees responsible for school board budgets to view these educators not as teachers and, thus, they became replaceable by less qualified staff members.

Outdoor education continued to be cut. On April 22, 1995 (Earth Day) in *The Ottawa Citizen*, Spears reported that the MacSkimming Outdoor Education Centre owned by the Ottawa Board of Education was still a preferred target of trustees for closure. It was still coming under criticism from trustees and ordinary taxpayers who argued that, “students can learn just as much by visiting the Central Experimental Farm, or a park” (Spears, 1995, p. C1). Trustees advocated that the centre become self-sustaining by raising user fees for Ottawa students to \$5.00 a visit and opening the doors to other school boards for \$10.00 a visit. Spears (1995) argued that it was not the funding but the five teachers and support staff that made outdoor educational programming possible. However, this was overshadowed by Spear’s other efforts to include quotes from students and teachers who emphasized the centre as the vehicle behind outdoor education. Spears (1995) even included a quote from Chuck Hopkins, the Toronto Board of Education’s superintendent of curriculum who argued, “Children must see, smell and feel nature from an early age to learn to love it . . . opposition to MacSkimming is almost persecution” (p. C1). These points demonstrate a shifting narrative that frames outdoor education as an aspect of education made possible by facilities, instead of ordinary teachers.

In contrast to this push to close outdoor education centres, at the same time schools in Toronto were beginning a grassroots movement to naturalize their school

grounds. This was being supported across Ontario by several agencies providing grants for these types of projects (e.g. the Canadian Wildlife Federation). In the *Toronto Star*, Kett (1994) reported that the efforts of Metropolitan Toronto's Ossington/Old Orchard Public School to naturalize their school grounds had inspired teachers to make efforts to integrate curriculum lessons indoors with learning outdoors on the school grounds. This project occurred with help from the community. This illustrates the type of attitude change, I argue, is necessary because this type of project made it possible for ordinary teachers to reconnect with outdoor education as a concern for all teachers (Raffan, 1996). Unlike many outdoor educators who focused on working at independent outdoor centres, teachers, like James Snetsinger, argued, "We've been amiss in skipping outdoor education" (Kett, p. B6). This school ground made it possible for teachers to reintegrate outdoor education back into their craft.

The Tory Government and the TDSB

In the newspapers, though, this movement was overshadowed as outdoor education centres continued to be hit with cuts. In a 1997 article written by Dare, he reported that Education Minister John Snobelen (of the Ontario Conservative government) startled Ontario's school trustees when he announced plans to cut 100 school boards, eliminating the jobs of 1,200 trustees and amalgamating the remaining school boards into huge school districts. This political move was called Bill 160, which was a legislative bill which shifted all decision-making powers regarding schools to the Education Minister (Barclay, 1998). This bill also reduced preparation time for teachers, conceded to the government how school district boards could use their budgets, and put a

stranglehold on support services like outdoor education programming. This was part of the governing Conservative party's Common Sense Revolution to reduce the Ontario deficit by making cuts to programs that assisted the public such as health care, transportation, and education (Barclay). In Barclay's satirical review of the Conservative governments 'successes' (blunders), he argues that Education Minister, John Snobelen, a man who had never finished high school, invented a crisis to shake up the school system. This is substantiated by authors like Kozolanka (2007). This resulted in a province-wide teacher's strike in October 1998 (Barclay, 1998; Morris, 2000), during which John Snobelen was removed from the education portfolio by Conservative Premier Mike Harris, and replaced by a new Education Minister, Dave Johnson, to weather the teacher's strike. The Minister made comments and the Conservative party made advertisements that school board administration, trustees, teachers, and unions across the province could not be trusted and decisions on education were better left to Johnson and his buddies in parliament (Barclay).

However, according to outdoor educator Mike Morris (2000) in an article published in *Pathways*, Bill 160 affected outdoor education in Toronto when the, "six former Metro Toronto school boards (Scarborough, East York, York, Toronto, North York, and Etobicoke) were amalgamated into one very large school board in January 1998, called the Toronto District School Board (TDSB)" (p. 3). After amalgamation, the supervisors of the TDSB outdoor centres met regularly in an alliance known as TOES (Toronto Outdoor Education Schools) to represent the interests of outdoor education. A district coordinator for outdoor education, Mark Whitcombe, and new outdoor centre supervisors were selected (Morris, 2000, p. 3). This move assisted outdoor educators to

organize and begin writing “formal curriculum and policy to justify the existence of their programs” (Morris, 2000, p. 3). Following this up in November 1999, the TOES group gathered to discuss and map out the future of outdoor education within the TDSB (Morris, 2000). However, as indicated in Morris’ (2000), TOES was established to represent the interests of outdoor education, not outdoor educators. The public committee in Peel region in the early 90s proceeded in a similar way as TOES in an effort to illustrate the necessity of outdoor education programming in Toronto. I argue that even though the Conservative government’s actions were a contributor to diminishing outdoor education in the TDSB and across the province, as Goodale foreshadowed in 1972, it was a “lack of political clout” (p. 6) on behalf of the educators to see beyond their centres and make apparent their own skills as teachers.

The following year outdoor education within the TDSB continued to suffer. In May 2000, a report on the delivery models for outdoor education in the TDSB was submitted to the budget committee, which included a brief description of each outdoor education centre and the aspects that made it unique (Morris, 2001). What is evident, is that TDSB outdoor education staff had placed their centres before themselves. By illustrating the unique aspects of each centre, they failed to illustrate their own unique contributions as educators concerned with making the natural world more relevant in the education system. In February and March 2001, TDSB trustees continued to debate the future of outdoor education, “including equity of opportunity for all TDSB students, differences in staffing models between centres, and the possibility of students paying a nominal user fee to attend outdoor centres” (Morris, 2001, p. 3). These debates finally sealed the fate of outdoor education teachers. In March 2001, the trustees accepted a

staffing model that would require a substantially reduced number of teachers and an expanded use of paraprofessional outdoor specialists and interns (university students on work terms) (Morris, 2001). This resulted in a number of outdoor education teachers, including all secondary teachers, being informed that they would return to classroom assignments effective September 2001. In April to May 2001, *The Toronto Star* published two columns by environmental reporter, Cameron Smith, who argued how the replacement of outdoor education teachers with paraprofessionals would be detrimental to students (Morris, 2001). Smith's May 2001 article reported that the decisions of the Conservative government to require teachers to focus on teaching mathematics, science, and reading came at the expense of other programs such as outdoor education. These

are the very attributes that are being smothered by school curriculums set at Queen's Park. They place too much stress on learning by volume within subject silos and too little on interdisciplinary exploring. There's too much stress on learning within the categories you'll find in any encyclopedia and too little on thinking outside the box. (p. K05)

One of the impacts of the approach taken by Queen's Park is the slow strangling of outdoor education. There is no money for it in the province's funding formulas . . . teachers are being replaced by "paraprofessionals," outdoor specialists and interns who will earn one-third less than teachers. However, they will have great difficulty delivering key objectives of outdoor education. That takes trained and experienced teachers. (p. K05)

But, in June 2001, the existing outdoor education staff made visits to local universities to interview prospective interns for temporary positions at the outdoor centres, in accordance with the new staffing model approved by the TDSB (Morris, 2001).

At this time of crisis within TDSB outdoor education, Mike Morris (2001) published an article in *Pathways: The Ontario Journal of Outdoor Education* arguing that,

the TDSB isn't the first outdoor education group to have to cope with change and it probably won't be the last. A number of organizations have reorganized or eliminated their outdoor education programs. Other programs have been saved at the last moment. . . .Where can we find a positive spin at this time? *For one, outdoor educators are realizing that we must be more proactive in telling our stories and in advocating for our cause* [italics added]. (p. 5)

Just as teachers, like Don Colby in 1981, told his story about his efforts to provide outdoor education through his high school, and his concern that it was becoming difficult to find teachers interested in facilitating outdoor education programs. Through Morris' (2001) own words, I argue like Raffan (1996) and Goodale (1972) that it is the stories of outdoor educators that are more important than highlighting the unique qualities of outdoor education facilities or programs.

Again, this was overshadowed by protests against the Conservative government's efforts to create a crisis in education, and the continued use of a centre-based narrative by the media and outdoor educators. On May 21, 2002, Kalinowski reported that the Mono Cliffs Outdoor Education Centre could be closing, indicating that 20 to 25 staff could be losing their jobs. Opening her article, she described how a geography class participating

in a hike on the Niagara Escarpment Trail would not be able to receive these types of experiences in the city. Sadly, in August 2002, Kalinowski, Bennan, and Brown reported in the *Toronto Star* that TDSB trustees had failed to balance the TDSB's books, which was required by law in the Education Act. After that the Conservative government assigned outside auditor, Al Rosen, who recommended that the current Education Minister, Elizabeth Witmer, take immediate control of the TDSB. Rosen slammed the trustees for spending more than 75% of the board's \$912 million on operations and programs the province did not intend to fund. Rosen endorsed a series of potential cuts he estimated would save \$73.6 million in 2003 budget, including a recommendation to close all 12 of the board's outdoor education centres by September 2003. Although staff identified the outdoor education centres as a programming priority, Rosen disagreed with that position. He indicated the TDSB's budget crisis had been generated by a failure to systematically reduce its spending to conform to the province's concept of education. He argued, "Any claims that expenditures are student and/or classroom focused must be closely scrutinized. It is not entirely clear why the trustees have chosen to direct a disproportionate share of its budget to non-classroom expenditures" (p. A08). On August 29, Schmidt (2002) reported in the *Toronto Star* that Elizabeth Witmer announced the province would take over responsibility for the TDSB's budget. This meant the TDSB joined other school boards in facing the same fate.

On October 29, 2002, it was announced that the provincially appointed supervisor, Paul Christie, planned to extinguish the \$90 million deficit from the TDSB's budget (Kalinowski, 2002b, October 29). According to Kalinowski, Christie indicated the board does not have the money to maintain its 84 pools, outdoor education centres,

and approximately 100 board office jobs. On November 23, 2002, provincially appointed supervisor, Paul Christie, approved his balanced budget for the TDSB. He indicated that he accomplished ending a \$490 million illegal deficit by TDSB school trustees by cutting jobs such as head-office staff, school secretaries, supply teachers, and parent advisers. Outdoor education was also cut, resulting in the closure of six out of eight outdoor education centres and more than \$4 million was removed from a \$10 million annual budget. Christie's decision came 3 days after the release of his budget which was denounced by trustees and members of the public.

Over those 3 days the *Toronto Star* published letters in favor of saving outdoor education centres. Grant Linney (2002, November 21), the current President of COEO, wrote:

what we must recognize is that this is ultimately a question of values, not dollars. And we must realize that these values ultimately come from the current provincial government. Christie's inability to see the closure of outdoor education centres as classroom cuts is stunning. How can urban children be informed and motivated to act on environmental concerns without having teacher-led experiences at outdoor education centres? (p. A23).

However, what is interesting to note is that (a) most of the staff at these centres were no longer teachers but technicians, and (b) that outdoor education centres had been referred to as centres, not classrooms, for several decades. Something, I argue, has created a distinction between classrooms and outdoor centres.

After Christie's decision, the *Toronto Star* began to report on the values that people felt in favor of TDSB outdoor centres. Coyle (2002, November 30) reported on the

memories of three teachers, who made comments about teaching art and reading lessons, overnights, and providing students with the opportunity to experience the migration of Monarch butterflies at these centres. On December 5, Crane reported that while private schools were expanding their outdoor and environmental education programs because of its value in developing ecological literacy and a lasting environmental ethic. A very different position reflected in the provincial government's tax policy forced the closure of six of Toronto's outdoor education centres.

On December 10, 2002, in the *National Post*, Schmit reported that educators hoped for revised funding formula with \$1.5-billion more support for cash strapped school boards. Education Minister Elizabeth Witmer indicated that she promised to act on these recommendations. "I am going to do everything I can to move forward with recommendations that benefit our students as quickly as we possibly can" (p. A11). However, when she was asked whether there would be new money available this year to help cash-strapped school boards, Ms. Witmer replied: "Maybe" (p. A11). This type of message indicates

What governments count on when they do something mean and nasty . . . short memories and attention spans. The pace of life being what it is, politicians assume-usually correctly-that if the storm can be weathered for a new cycle or two, media and voters will soon enough move on to something else. (Coyle, 2002, p. A35)

Luckily, on December 19, 2002, Kalinowski reported in the *Toronto Star* that the TDSB had come up with a plan to keep three centres operating until June after garnering \$1 million in public and private partnerships. However, three centres were still planned

for closure: the Pine River Centre, Noisy River, and Boyne River. Toronto trustee Paula Fletcher accused “the board and province of short-sighted penny-pinching, acting without the vision that built the reputation of Toronto's outdoor education program. Closing these particular centres defies logic, she says” (Kalinowski, 2003, January 28, p. B01). This was because the Pine River centre was the only one of the board's nine nature centres that was fully wheelchair accessible. The Boyne River centre had a unique ecology centre. In the same article, Mark Whitcombe, Coordinator for TDSB outdoor education and Norm Frost, Supervisor of the Boyne River Centre, indicated that the closure of the centres does not take into consideration the loss of expertise developed over years through each centre's staff teams. Yet again, this illustrates an idea that outdoor education, even staff team expertise, is made possible by outdoor education centres.

Learning the Importance of the Outdoor Educator's Story

I argue that Linney (2002), Whitcombe and Frost's narratives (Kalinowski, 2003, January 28) also illustrate Morris' (2001) argument that outdoor educators need to discursively situate themselves and their efforts at the forefront of outdoor education, instead of its centres. In 2003, the Conservative government was defeated and a Liberal government was elected. In a January 10, 2004 article written by Cameron Smith, he reported on the upcoming retirement of park superintendent Barry McQuay, a qualified teacher who had taught outdoor education for many years at Foley Mountain Conservation Area for the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority. Smith (2004) reported that savage cost cutting by Ontario's former Conservative government had threatened the education program, but fundraising support from McQuay, the Friends of Foley

Mountain, and Rideau Conservation Authority had maintained the program and plans to hire a replacement were in place when McQuay retired. Smith (2004) reported that McQuay argued that the support for his program reaffirmed,

how important outdoor education is for children. As I've said many times, outdoor education is not a frill, as it was so often depicted by cost-cutters. It's not learning the names of trees and birds. It is, as McQuay says, learning about interconnections. And that, in essence, is learning about systems analysis, a skill in that's in high demand in about every profession. (p. F02)

This position indicated by McQuay illustrates the true educational value of teachers as outdoor educators who can describe their efforts and, thus, the value of outdoor education.

The Closure of the Frost Centre

This notion of outdoor educators as being important to outdoor education and that outdoor education is systems learning was overshadowed again by the July closure of the Ontario provincial government funded and operated Leslie Frost Centre (Ball, 2004; Blefry, 2004; Harries, 2004a; Rienhart, 2004). The centre-based focus on education was reignited in light of moves to highlight the efforts of outdoor educators who actually made outdoor education programs possible. This centre was slated to be closed to save \$1.2 million dollars annually for the new Liberal provincial government. "The closing had been rumoured for weeks, but the finality and swiftness of yesterday's announcement stunned local residents who consider the Leslie Frost Centre, about 30 kilometers north of Minden, a vital part of their community fabric" (Harris, 2004a, p. A2). The centre,

named after former premier Leslie Frost, opened as a training facility for Ministry of Natural Resources workers, but over the years opened its doors to other government staff, school groups, eco-tourism groups, and corporate clients (Rienhart, 2004).

However, Liberal Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) Minister David Ramsay and Steve Payne, spokesman for the Natural Resources Ministry, said the centre was heavily subsidized and not considered a core function of its Ministry. Payne commented, "If we were to upgrade it and up the fees in order to make it viable, we would then be entering the competitive arena . . . with privately run outdoor centres . . . We wouldn't be able to compete." (Rienhart, 2004, p. A9). So, the property was decommissioned and turned over to the government-controlled Ontario Realty Corporation, which declared the buildings and land surplus. The centre was planned to be offered to other government agencies or sold on the open market (Rienhart). According to Harries (2004b), this ran contrary to the Liberal government's plans to focus on education and health, arguing that the Minister of Natural Resources, David Ramsay, felt that outdoor education was not a core responsibility for his Ministry.

However, amongst all of these issues, according to Harries (2004a, 2004b) the Frost Centre staff were the ones who received the brunt of the closure, receiving notice only through a memo 1 week before the centre's closure. She argued that this was a significant factor as the centre provided several jobs in the area of Minden, Ontario. However, in light of Harries (2004b) argument, newspapers were mourning the loss of the centre more than recognizing the loss of an expert educational staff team. In a report written by Elston (2004) in the *Niagara Falls Review*, teacher John Howden was quoted saying the loss of the Frost Centre "was like losing a friend" (p. B11).

After the closure, several articles followed, protesting the government's actions and attempting to illustrate the benefits of outdoor education. At this time, Grant Linney (2004, August 10), President of C.O.E.O., published another article in the *Toronto Star*. He argued that,

Residential centres are not the only way to have outdoor education experiences, but the Frost centre is an icon in this province, particularly in terms of education for environment, curriculum and wellness. Its strengths remain and the symbolism of its closing is profound. (Linney, 2004, p. A13)

Linney (2004) went on to argue that children can develop positive qualities through several first-time life changing experiences by participating in activities such as aquatic studies, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, orienteering, and ropes course programs.

Cameron Smith contrasted Linney's article in an August 21, 2004 article published in the *Toronto Star* writing,

It's not just facilities that are being removed from the education system, and it's the centre's staff. They will be disbanded and scattered to other ministry outposts. Lost to the schools will be their on-the-ground expertise that teachers don't have. (p. H05)

Outdoor education centres run by school boards offer the same insights. The Frost centre was different, however, because it worked at a higher level. The Frost Centre staff were highly trained Ministry of Natural Resources professionals whose focus was on monitoring and maintaining the mutual support systems under which all things live . . . The courses offered all dealt with ecosystem

functioning and explained how natural systems allow living things to live. (p. H05)

This is an important point to recognize as the president of C.O.E.O. placed more emphasis on recognizing the Frost Centre as an icon, while Smith recognized the power of the staff as the icons for this outdoor education program.

Nothing happened, though. The Frost Centre remained closed. On January 19, 2005, David Ramsay announced in a letter published in the Toronto Star that, "Education is one of Ontario Parks' four core objectives" (p. A23).

Campsite24.ca is a new website that I am particularly proud of, created by Ontario Parks. Campsite24.ca is not meant to replace outdoor environmental education, it is meant to inspire outdoor environmental education. This innovative website makes parks available to everyone across the province at any time. It encourages visits to parks and allows children to build on the education they may have already received at a park. (Ramsay, p. A23)

However, when an outdoor education centre is cut and education staff put out of work, does a website really inspire outdoor education? This illustrated a continued lack of understanding by government and public media about the efforts of outdoor educators as the power behind outdoor education and that outdoor education dealt with the real world.

Recognizing Our Disconnection with Nature

On April 23, 2005, in light of this move by David Ramsay to shore up support for *inspiring* outdoor education, Spears reported about a research study conducted by Steward Evans, a British biology professor. Evans concluded that, “Many children in his home town couldn’t recognize an ordinary starling” (Spears, 2005, p. 1).

He tested 217 children and teenagers, and found that they recognized only the birds that appear in cartoons, in advertising or on Christmas cards: woodpeckers and robins. What little the children know about their environment comes through photos or pop culture symbols, he realized not through actual contact with nature.” (Spears, 2005, p. 1).

Evans argued that it is the way biology is taught within school and university systems, indicating a decline in the amount and quality of practical ecology. He argued, “Students today are taught cell structure, genes and molecules more often than what the whole animal or plant looks like. They can distinguish the mitochondria from the golgi bodies but seldom visit the local stream or pond to find tadpoles and algae” (Spears, 2005, p. 1). Spears’ report would be overshadowed by an April 3, 2006 article published in the *Toronto Star* where Kalinowski reported that TDSB outdoor education programs and other programs were being planned to be reduced further to ensure a balanced school board budget after it had been reported to be \$84.5 million in deficit. This was because the Liberal government was trying to fix Ontario’s school funding which had been destroyed by the previous Conservative government.

However, another article published in the *Toronto Star* on October 10, 2006, by reporters Gillespie and Kalinowski, titled *Why some kids expect whales in Lake Simcoe*:

Ontario falling behind in 'eco-studies' Outdoor programs seen as expendable supported Spears' report and the study by Evans. In their report, it was described how a group of grade 4 students expected to see whales in Lake Simcoe during a trip to Sibbald Point Outdoor Education Center. Jennifer Baron, teacher and operator of the centre, stated, "It shows how disconnected they are with nature" (Gillespie & Kalinowski, 2006, p. A1). Gillespie and Kalinowski argue that for "7,000 York Region students who visit the centre, the five hours they spend with Baron in the woods isn't nearly enough to counteract an education system that has all but abandoned environmental content" (p. A1). Gillespie and Kalinowski (2006) reported that Environmental Commissioner Gord Miller, teachers, and environmentalists are concerned that,

Ontario is turning out a generation of ecological illiterates. Once a leader in the field, Ontario is now the only province with no formal environmental science curriculum. Some passionate teachers champion ecology and environmental issues in their classes, but there is nothing in the system that compels students to study the subject. (p. A1)

Factors that have shaped the current state of outdoor education are: (a) the constant threat of cuts to outdoor centres as school boards try to balance their budgets; and (b) the result of the Conservative government actions in 1998, which eliminated environmental studies from the curriculum. "The curriculum was rewritten with the concept that environmental material could be infused in the overall curriculum" (Gillespie & Kalinowski, 2006, p. A1). "Now environmental studies are supposed to be integrated in the curriculum through optional modules for teachers. Its not happening, Miller said" (p. A1). Because environmental science is not in the curriculum, many

teachers simply are not teaching it. "Education Minister Kathleen Wynne indicated that she would be dealing with this fault in the education system, adding that it's part of the regular reviews process" (p. A1). However, at the end of their report, Gillespie and Kalinowski (2006) returned to the argument that 3 years ago the TDSB closed 3 of 8 outdoor centres and cut time spent at the remaining facilities.

In a response to Gillespie and Kalinowski's (2006) article, Leah Casselman, President, Ontario Public Service Employees Union in Toronto, questioned the motives of the Ontario Liberal government after it closed the Frost Centre in 2004, calling the Liberal government repeat offenders noting that they slashed contracts for natural heritage educators in 37 provincial parks.

In August, when I visited Rock Point Provincial Park, I learned that the natural heritage educator there had seen her job reduced from 26 weeks in 2004 to just 14 weeks in 2006. This skilled, experienced nature educator was simply not on the job during the weeks when children were in school. As a result, only one school group, with 24 students, visited Rock Point this year to learn about the plants and animals that make up the ecosystem along the Lake Erie shore. (Casselman, 2006, October 12, p. A27)

On March 27, 2007 it was announced that "music classes, art, gym and nature studies - often forgotten as "frills" in Ontario's push for the 3 Rs - will get a \$35 million boost to give children a more well-rounded education, says Education Minister Kathleen Wynne" (Brown & Rushowy, 2007, p. B7). "The new grant is part of a \$781 million hike in funding Wynne unveiled yesterday for Ontario schools" (p. B7). However, several proponents of the public felt that this was not enough. On January 10, 2008 in the

Toronto Star Mahoney reported that Education Minister Kathleen Wynne announced that “The Ontario government is considering restoring specialty programs for older elementary students, including outdoor education and technology and design classes” (p. A6). This was part of a \$150 million dollar funding target for students from grade 4 to 8 that was part of the Ontario Liberal governments’ re-election platform. However, parents, like Annie Kidder, commented that this is an important start because schools are too focused today on numeracy and literacy, but remained skeptical that the money would be enough. On April 1, 2008 in *The Ottawa Citizen*, Payne (2008) reported, “Now, a growing focus on the environment has meant a new provincial commitment to outdoor education centres, and Ottawa, long considered a leader in the field, is at the forefront of getting students into classrooms in the great outdoors” (p. B4). “Students in Ottawa are fortunate that woods, wetlands and historic waterways are a short bus ride away. But, even so, a visit to the MacSkimming or Bill Mason centres is the first real taste some Ottawa students get of the great outdoors”(p. B4).

My Conclusions

... To conclude this presentation, I argue that outdoor education should be a concern of all good teachers. This is not a new idea. Though a narrative barrier has been contextualized around the idea that outdoor education, as Education Minister Kathleen Wynne says, are only “specialty programs for older elementary students” (Mahoney, 2008, p. A6). Even though the current Liberal government and the Education Minister are indicating that they will provide millions of dollars to fund these programs, “often forgotten as frills in Ontario's push for the 3 Rs” (Brown & Rushowy, 2007, p. B7). The

use of the word *specialty* still contextualizes outdoor education as an addition to education or a frill, and not an area of concern for all good teachers. It should be noted that the origin of the word *specialty* is borrowed from the French word *especialité*, meaning unusual thing (Barnhart, 1988).

Secondly, outdoor educators like myself need to realize, as Raffan (1996) argues that working at outdoor centres we have “isolated ourselves from other ‘good teachers’ by conducting our business in enclaves separate from schools” (p. 10-11). These enclaves have further contextualized our educational craft as something different from that of ordinary teachers that can only be accomplished with the existence of special facilities immersed in nature. This is because these centres are thought to provide urban students with the only opportunities to experience nature first-hand. Because of this, many people living in urban centers, like Toronto, view themselves as something separate from nature. This is cultural fallacy. A centre does not make a program; people do, that is because we are a part of nature. What outdoor educators need to realize is that when a centre closes, it becomes: a property to be sold on the open market (Rienhart, 2004). However, this does not have to stop outdoor educators from continuing to offer outdoor education. The power of outdoor education is in the educators powering its programs. As Goodale (1972) indicated, outdoor educators should throw their energies into creating a habitable urban environment because it is part of nature. This means that outdoor educators should take their craft to the schools, make outdoor education more relevant to mainstream education.

The final point I wish to make from my historical analysis is that people are more important to the success of outdoor education, than property or equipment. When I say

people I mean outdoor educators and ordinary teachers. This is because we all need to tell and share our stories. We learn from other people's stories. That is a part of life. Dana and Yendol-Silva (2003) argue that if educators do not tell their stories, then others will, like the news media or academics publishing journal articles. Remember the last report I described written by Payne (2008)? He demonstrated how the Ontario news media has often focused on describing the icons of outdoor education as the facilities and the land, often ignoring the people. People are important. People are the ones that make outdoor education really happen and our educational stories are powerful, so we should ensure that they are heard. In conclusion, I argue that outdoor educators are, in part, responsible for creating a faultline in the ideology shaping the public's ideas about Ontario-based outdoor education; one I call the *centre-based/people-based faultline*. This faultline illustrates two competing ideologies in outdoor education: the dominant emphasizing the fallacy that outdoor centres ensure the successful implementation of outdoor education programs, and the submissive emphasizing the true power behind the successful implementation of outdoor education programs: people.

I stepped back from the podium. The audience clapped. I unscrewed the lid of my water bottle and took a long sip. A small trickle of water dripped onto my shirt. I felt slightly embarrassed, but reminded myself not to show it. All I could think was, *wow that was a mouthful I just said*.

Question Period

“Okay,” said the timekeeper. Her cards were still sitting on the chair next to her. I was unsure if I had gone over time, but I realized that she had not given me any notice. I thought, *I guess my preparation wasn't a waste of time after all*. “Thanks, James. Now we will take 5 minutes to ask questions” she said. The crowd was silent. For a long pause it seemed as if no one was prepared to ask questions. I thought, *oh no . . . they're shell shocked. Too much talking, I should have waited for the organizers to fix the computer*. Then, a hand shot up. I nervously waved my hand and motioned for a short old man with glasses to ask his question.

“I was wondering why you didn't speak about the benefits of outdoor education like self-esteem or interpersonal growth. What I'm wondering is how your research relates to the larger body of outdoor education literature? More specifically, how does it relate to the cognitive or affective domains of outdoor education?”

“Well, to tell the truth, it doesn't. I wasn't focusing on socio-psychological concepts in outdoor education” I replied. The man seemed upset, “. . . at least not directly. Goodale² argues that focusing strictly on the cognitive and affective domains of outdoor education strips from education its most important function. This function is to make good people. According to Goodale,³ to focus only on enhancing aspects such as self-esteem places a handicap on developing good people that should be the central focus for outdoor education. That doesn't mean that I devalue social-psychological research in outdoor education, but what I did was take an entirely different approach, a cultural

² (Goodale, 1972).

³ (Goodale, 1972).

approach to Ontario-based outdoor education instead of a psychological approach. I examined how cultural factors, like the news media, contextualized outdoor education in Ontario.

“However, I should note that my study is related to the cognitive domain in some ways. It illustrates what Festinger⁴ would describe as a state of cognitive dissonance, just instead of at an individual level, it was demonstrated at a cultural level. Working with the idea that people in a state of dissonance try to lower their level of dissonance in the quickest and easiest way possible, when outdoor centres are threatened, outdoor educators and the community work really hard to protect them in the belief that these centres are the most important factor for providing students and the public with opportunities to interact with nature. However, I argue this is a fallacy; that outdoor educators and community members sacrifice the educational quality of their programs by recommending or accepting that less qualified technicians can do their job or fill their positions. The problem is that technicians do not have the qualifications, like Hammerman et al.⁵ argue, to deal with providing experiences for children that guide their behavior toward reaching school board educational goals or provincial mandates.” The man did not look pleased. I thought, *did I answer his question properly? Why is he crossing his arms? I hope I didn't make him upset.* Another hand popped out of the crowd.

“You talk a lot about teachers and put down technicians. Before I earned my PhD, I was a field technician. Are you saying I'm not important or even an outdoor

⁴ (Festinger, 1957).

⁵ (Hammerman et al., 2001, p. 61)

educator?" I took a deep gulp. I realized I was discussing a very delicate issue.

Reflecting for a moment on my own analysis, I realized that many of these people had probably gotten involved in outdoor education as field technicians or outdoor leaders, not as teachers. Even for me, being an educator was a new prospect, but understanding a little bit about the situational constraints in outdoor education in Ontario I decided to make no apologies. *This was an important question*, I thought. I cherished the opportunity to answer it.

"I disagree with your comment," I said, "but understand your concern. I feel that field technicians play a very important role in outdoor education. In fact, before I earned my Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.), I was a technician. After I earned my B. Ed., though, my peers began to call me an outdoor educator, instead of an outdoor education facilitator. I still facilitated outdoor education programs, but I also had a new interest to ensure that the activities I provided were linked to the government curriculum. The problem was that at my outdoor centre, I was one of the first people to even consider connecting our outdoor programs to our province's curriculum. This is still a new idea to many of my peers who are technicians. This doesn't mean that they are less qualified individuals. Many of them have university degrees in Outdoor Recreation from Lakehead University or college diplomas in Recreation Leisure Services from Flemming College. I myself earned my first degree in Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, majoring in their Parks option. However, these are not the same as professional degrees in Education. Before I became a member of the Ontario College of Teachers, I didn't have a clue about educational curriculum documents or government mandates. These are important to making outdoor education programs educational.

What technicians are good at is facilitating the activities, the origin of the word facilitate means to make easy.⁶ Their education ensures they earned basic certifications in wilderness first aid and a few skills like rock climbing, high ropes, mountain biking, and canoeing. They have the skills to facilitate these types of experiences for their participants. But, I argue, that teachers provide a different aspect to outdoor education; they ensure that outdoor education programs are educational.”

“I still don’t get what you mean by educational?” said a voice from the crowd. “Government curriculums are inherently political and subjective. I would rather spend my time teaching objective skills like how to climb a rock face or paddle a canoe. Isn’t that more important?”

“Well, I would agree that there is value in teaching students how to participate in physical activities like canoeing. I agree with your comment that the curriculum is subjective. But everything people do is subjective. You may think that you are teaching objective skills when you teach students how to paddle a canoe, but there are always going to be subjective choices in what you choose to teach. As an educator, my own subjectivity is something I accept. To take that a little further, I can now connect the Ontario science curriculum to a lesson on how force is used by people paddling a canoe. That would make the activity more meaningful educationally to a student. The student may not know they are learning about forces, but when the student returns to the classroom because that idea was covered during canoeing, the student may know something about how some forces have been used by themselves in their lives.

⁶ (Chambers, 1965).

“But, what I’m arguing is much more than just focusing on physical activities. Drasdo⁷ warned outdoor educators in the United Kingdom that it is important that outdoor education does not suffer from a preponderance of scientists and physical educationists. To keep a balance in outdoor education, educators from other areas, like the humanities, should begin to run outdoor education courses. What he was advocating was a diversification of teachers who teach outdoor education courses, not just specialists. This means it’s important to recognize the value of an existing outdoor educator’s abilities, but also recognize that ordinary teachers can also deliver and should be involved in outdoor education programs. Teachers are not just babysitters, standing on the sidelines as disciplinary figures. This means that outdoor educators and technicians should think beyond outdoor pursuits and also focus on the environment we live in. Educators and technicians should use the outdoors to illustrate our place in our local ecosystem and how our actions affect our environment. It means developing care and concern for the ecosystems we live in. That’s what Elrick was arguing in Smith’s⁸ article. It’s one thing to learn how to paddle a canoe, it is another thing to learn how our actions paddling the canoe propel us forward. Just like, it’s one thing to know that clean drinking water comes from the tap in my home. It’s another to know where the water I drink comes from and how it gets to my home. It’s like Simon Beames⁹ said, we need citizens who know enough to stir the macaroni and cheese because they know if they don’t they will be spending the next hour cleaning the pot. However, before we can have

⁷ (Drasdo, 1973).

⁸ (Smith, 2005).

⁹ (Beames, 2002).

citizens that know enough to keep stirring the macaroni we first need educators who know the same.” I said. I unscrewed the cap to my water bottle and took another sip.

“Okay, we have time for one more question.” said the timekeeper. A hand rose from the back of the crowd. I nodded at a middle-aged woman. She was scratching her head. She nodded back.

“It seems to me that you’ve used a lot of newspaper articles to substantiate your claims. That’s not quantifiable and newspaper articles aren’t considered credible scholarly sources. You don’t even cite any tier one journal articles. What I want to know is why I, as a scholar, should even care to consider your work? It just doesn’t seem sophisticated enough or trustworthy.” I nodded my head. I was waiting for one of these questions.

“Well, first of all, you’re right, my study is not quantifiable. It’s not even a quantitative study. But not everything in life has to be quantifiable. Sometimes it’s more important to look at the quality of an experience rather than what can be quantified. Take Priest’s¹⁰ study on the influences affecting outdoor leaders. He crunched a bunch of numbers and discovered that outdoor leaders in North America are more concerned about risk prevention because in North American there is a higher level of people who are prepared to litigate. This is an important point to understand about outdoor leaders and it would be interesting to know if the same is true for outdoor educators. But other things, like Don Colby’s¹¹ concern that the educational philosophies of teachers were changing, and that new teachers did not value outdoor education, are a question more of quality

¹⁰ (Priest, 1989).

¹¹ (Truman, 1981).

than quantity. Researchers could quantify that question by would finding out how many people really value outdoor education. But that study wouldn't look any deeper than the surface. Goodale¹² would argue that this is the *damning little note about the lack of sophistication in outdoor education research*. I agree with you that the sources I reviewed as the data for this study are not credible tier one journal articles. On the surface it appears that point does lower the credibility of my study. However, in response, I side with Goodale¹³ and argue that the push for sophistication in outdoor education research *is true, but deceiving. Sophistication too frequently means that something not very important is researched very well. The real issue is to identify areas of research that are important and to stop conducting the obviously congratulatory investigations*. I argue that what is really sophisticated research is not what is always considered sophisticated by the masses, even if those masses are a bunch of scholars. After all, the word *sophisticated* comes from the Latin word *sophist*, a word of Greek origin meaning *one who gives intellectual instruction for pay*. This became a term of contempt by philosophers because ancient *sophists were famous for their clever, specious arguments*.¹⁴ I replied. The lady turned her head. I interpreted that this action indicated her contempt for my response.

"Okay, well, thanks, James. It was a . . . pleasure." Then the timekeeper asked the next scholar to present. As I sat down, the now functioning Power Point screen read: *Increasing self-concept in outdoor education: An analysis of the benefits of an overnight residential program*.

¹² (Goodale, 1972, p. 6).

¹³ (Goodale, 1972, p. 6).

¹⁴ (Harper, 2001).

The Night Time Social

When night came, the conference headed into the dining hall for a social gathering. I shared a few beers with my new colleagues. Some wanted to talk to me, complimenting me on my guts and saying that as a graduate student, it took a lot to even try to present some research with all the leading scholars at this conference. However, most of them hedged their comments, making recommendations on how I could improve my study. Others, after commending me for my courage, recommended that I should take some time and frame my study with more credible sources before I attempt to present research on this topic again. This made me feel a little down. On the surface it seemed that these people were trying to accept me, but their intentions seemed to be guise of false admiration. I got the sense that most people really did not accept my research. After a while people began to trickle out of the dining hall towards their cabins. Being one of the few Canadians at the conference and bored with the remaining company, I decided to wander off to the outdoor centre's campfire pit. The staff had lit a fire, but no one had come to appreciate it. So, I decided to sit down and comfort myself amongst the smell of wood smoke.

For the Reader

In order for the reader to follow the embedded theoretical and ideological threads presented by each campfire participant – who, in effect, bring three literature based perspectives – I will employ the following text and format cues:

- Mike who represents Elrick, will be seen in the following font called Arial Narrow.
 - “Hi, I’m Mike and I represent Elrick’s published narrative.”
- Lou who represents Preston, will be seen in the following font called Franklin Gothic Book.
 - Hi, I’m Lou and I represent Preston’s published narrative.”
- Simon who represents Beames, will be seen in the following font called Calibri.
 - “Hi, I’m Simon and I represent Beames’ published narrative.”
- James who represents himself, will be seen in the following font called Times New Roman.

“Hi, I’m James and I represent the author of this text.”

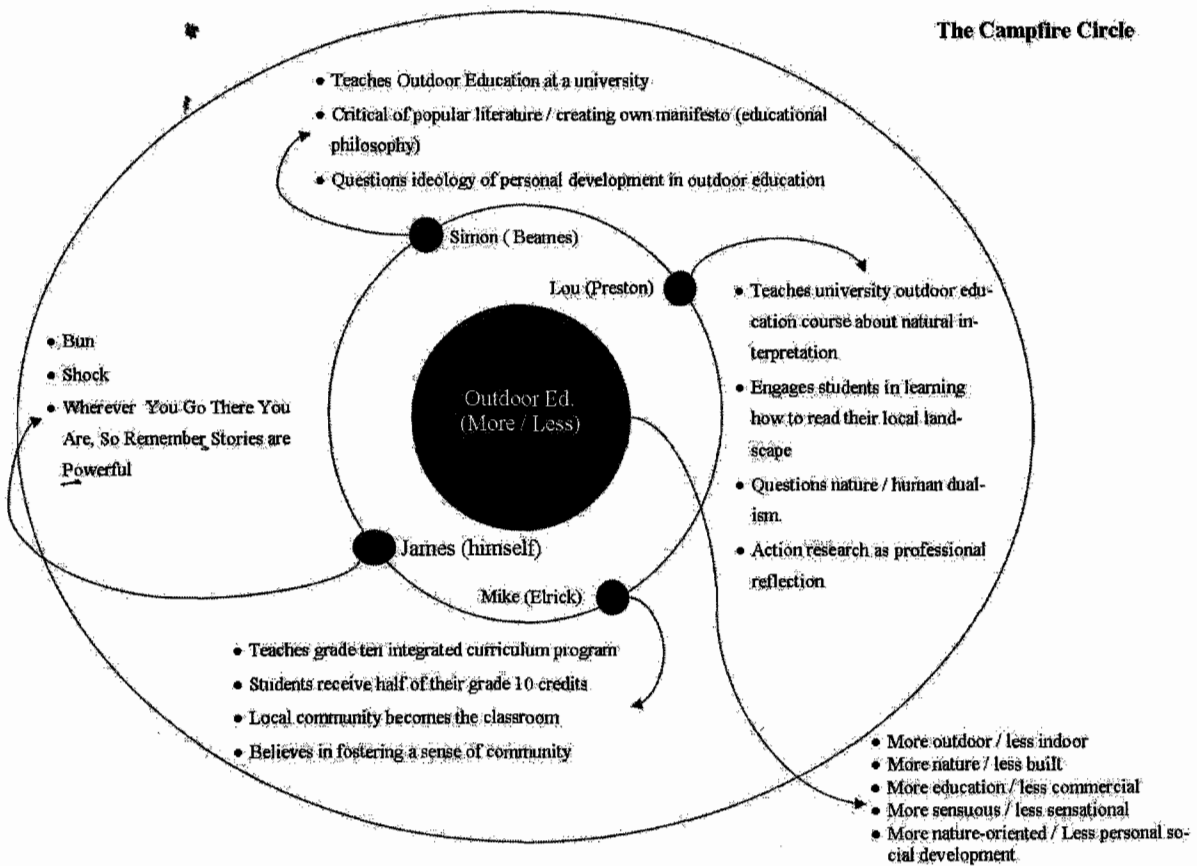


Figure 1: The Campfire Circle

The Campfire Circle

"Eh?" A voice boomed after a few minutes. "Can I sit with you, James?" I looked up to see a man, slightly older than myself. He had used the stereotypical Canadian colloquialism, but had a bit of an English accent. I did not know if he was mocking me like the other scholars or was being sincere.

"Sure," I replied. He sat down on a log across from me.

"My name's Simon. I didn't get to meet you at the social. I had to spend most of the time trying to get away from long winded blowhards. You know the kind, *the sophisticated*." I laughed. Then another voice called from the darkness.

"Eh! Simon? Where'd you go?"

"Over 'ere Mike!" said Simon, "I'm sitting at the campfire with the smart ass who knew the origin of the word sophisticated."

"That guy, I wanted to speak to him." Out of the darkness came an older man. "I snatched a few beers, pops, and a package of hot dogs from the fridge. No one's left in the dining hall. That young staff member said I could grab whatever I wanted." The man put the drinks and food on the ground and held out his hand. "Hi, I'm Mike. I liked your presentation. Want a beer?" he said.

"Sure," I replied. Grabbing the beer from Mike's hand, I twisted the top and took a swig.

"You're Canadian, eh?" asked Mike. He twisted the cap off a bottle of beer.

"Yeah," I replied.

"Nice to know there's other Canadians around." said Mike.

"Yeah," said Simon.

“Can I join you guys?” said a woman. She appeared out of nowhere. “The social’s done and I can’t sleep. Only been on the continent for a few days, haven’t got used to the time difference.”

“You’re more than welcome,” I replied.

“Great!” she grabbed a seat on the same log as Mike. “I’m Lou,” she said. We all introduced ourselves. Mike offered Lou a beer, but she had brought her own.

“So you really feel that people are more important. I agree, too often people think that outdoor education is defined by its land and specialty centers, but you put the people, the employees, and the community as the power behind outdoor education. That’s not a jaw dropping conclusion, but different. I like different.” said Mike.

“You’re the guy who spoke about outdoor education in Ontario?” asked Lou.

“Yep,” I replied.

“Neat little study, not very rigorous, but you shared what you discovered and made a good argument. I liked how you showed that people often contextualize humans as being something separate from nature. I’ve been wrestling with that aspect in my own outdoor education practice.”

“You know what I was interested in?” Simon interrupted, “your idea about stories.”

“Oh, well that’s not a new idea.” I replied. “There’s a whole swath of scholars, scientists, and practitioner-researchers who are starting to turn to storytelling as a way of knowing in social science¹⁵.”

¹⁵ (Ellis, 2004; Suzuki, 2003b; Winter, 1989).

"I have a story I've been tinkering with for awhile. I'd like share it. It's about an outdoor educator" said Simon.

"I have one too," said Lou. "Maybe I can share mine after."

"Cool," said Mike. "How appropriate . . . stories being told around a campfire. I'll share one, too. I guess I'll follow you Lou." Lou nodded her head.

"I never expected this when I sat through the first research presentation." I stood up in a fit of excitement. The others smiled. "Even though it is a conference connected to the Coalition for Educators in the Outdoors, I thought I was a lone scholar in this area, the lone storyteller. This will be fun. It'll develop a sense of community, instead of competition. Okay, Simon, tell us your story." Acknowledging Simon's gesture, I sat down on a log next to a stick I had started to use to stoke the fire and shifted my bum into a comfortable position. The first of the large logs began to catch fire. Simon stood up.

"I'll call this story: Thinking Outside the Bun."¹⁶ The fire popped. A large spark flew into the air. The spark landed, brushing my toes. I pulled them back, crouching on the log. Simon began to tell his story.

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¹⁶ (M. Conolly, personal communication, September 23, 2008).

Chapter Six: Thinking Outside the Bun

It was Thursday, the middle of Outdoor Ed's work week. Ed was sleeping comfortably on his bunk, dreaming plans for Saturday night. The buzzer went off on Ed's alarm. A quick slap silenced it. He rolled out of bed, opened the window to a cold breeze and a silvery sky. After rubbing his shoulders, he put on his autumn wears. Ready, he left his cabin. Taking a deep breath, he gazed at the tree tops swaying in a slight breeze as he made his way to the dining hall. *Swaying east again*, Ed thought. *It's going to be a cool day*. Ed wandered into the dining hall and walked straight towards the coffee. It had been a busy week. He was counting the days 'til his next block off Saturday night.

Ed's Last Few Days

Yesterday, Outdoor Ed delivered a leadership program for a local *Training Institute*. The institute advertized that they ran a government sponsored Youth Gang Exit & Ambassador Leadership Project. Outdoor Ed worked with participants from their second stream: the Youth Ambassador Employment Preparation Project. Their brochure indicated their purpose was, "to enhance the employment readiness of up to 25 youth."¹⁷ Participants were involved in many activities such as: (a) receiving, a 25 Week Employment Readiness and Leadership Preparation Program; (b) Be remunerated up to \$280.00 per week; (c) Have the opportunity to make a difference in the community by

¹⁷ (CTI Canadian Training Institute, n.d. [brochure])

delivering presentations; and crammed at the bottom of the brochure (d), Complete a Leadership Ropes Course.¹⁸”

On Wednesday morning Ed’s supervisor took a lieu day and left a written note explaining, “The group coming is a gang exit program. You will be working with a youth-at-risk population. *They have not got back to me on what they are looking for in a Leadership Ropes Course. So I am guessing until I hear otherwise.*¹⁹” Ed laughed at the irony of the moment, because his centre’s brochure indicated, “Our staff will work with your team to design a program specific to your needs and desired outcomes.”²⁰ This hadn’t happened. Ed didn’t know what the institute wanted in a Leadership Ropes Course. Ed ran the same generic activities he always seemed to run: initiatives, low ropes, and high ropes. All the while trying to sell the idea that he was delivering, “a great opportunity for groups to work together, build trust and communication . . . in a setting that promotes personal growth.”²¹ Ed learned quickly that he couldn’t sell this program to them. Several members of the group chose to not participate. So, at the end of the initiatives program, to try and understand why, Ed decided to debrief the group.

“Let’s look for some key words to describe your morning?” Ed said.

“Participation,” said one person.

“Communication,” said the next.

¹⁸ (Ibid.)

¹⁹ (A Sawyers, personal communication, August 8, 2007).

²⁰ YMCA of Greater Toronto. (2007). Building future leaders. *Cedar Glen*. [Brochure]

²¹ (Ibid.)

“That's two; could I get a third?” The group was silent. Ed looked at several of the participants. They looked right back at him. An intense moment occurred as he made eye contact with a pursed lipped young man, with a tear drop tattooed below his eye.

“Well, it's kinda' like respect. Ya' see, a lot of us found these activities were planned for little kids and we don't do that back home.” said the man with the tear drop tattoo.

“Ya' but you know at home we do a lot of workshops and talking. We don't get to do these types of activities where we get to know each other and have some fun,” said the institute instructor. Ed kept his mouth shut. He didn't think the group was having fun. He didn't think the group was getting to know each other better. But he did his job and worked his 6 hour day, broken down into 1 ½ hour activity periods. The group was gone by 3:30 Ed was off work by 4:30. At the end of Wednesday, Ed was happy, “only 3 days to go” he told himself.

“Only 4 days to go,” he told himself at the end of Tuesday when he had delivered program for a Catholic school group. Again, he ran a low ropes and high ropes program. Again, the group's organizer had not gotten back to his supervisor. But when the class arrived, the teacher did ask the outdoor education staff to focus on teamwork and communication. So, Ed did.

“Only 5 days to go,” he told himself at the end of Monday. On his first day he ran an initiatives, low ropes, and high ropes program for two grade 7 classes. This time the client had talked to his supervisor. His supervisor asked him to focus on teamwork.

This morning Ed sighed. Stirring his coffee, he thought: I hope this day will be different. Unfortunately, he was about to discover that it would not. Eating his breakfast,

Jones and Slick told Ed the schedule looked, “pretty straight forward.” A public high school was sending a grade 10 gym class: 24 students, with 16 girls and 8 guys. Ed, Slick, and Jones were scheduled to facilitate three activities: initiatives, low ropes, and high ropes. Ed sighed, “What does the group want to accomplish?”

“The sup’ wrote that they want to focus on teamwork” Jones replied.

“Teamwork, okay.” Ed said, nodding his head. “Only 3 days to go,” he mumbled.

Setting Up The Ropes Course

After breakfast, Outdoor Ed and Jones took a golf cart down the centre’s steep hill to the main ropes course and the equipment shed. After the bumpy ride, Jones parked the golf cart beside the equipment shed. Jumping out of the cart and brandishing a key, Jones began to open the shed’s doors. Outdoor Ed followed, grabbing a staff lanyard, prussik loop, and webbing. Then, swinging the next door open, Ed popped open a box labeled: Pamper Pole and Flying Squirrel ropes. Ed smiled. Last week, he had searched, found, organized, and labeled large plastic bins for the climbing ropes in the ropes shed. Before then the ropes had been stored in a mess. So, he reorganized the way ropes were stored in the shed. Reflecting on his satisfaction, Ed thought to himself; *I just need to continue to role model this kind of initiative and they may learn to clean up after themselves instead of saying “I don’t have time.”*

Ed grabbed four static strength ropes, a handful of carabineers, a track pulley, and two slot belay devices. Loading this equipment into the carriage of the golf cart, Ed scooted back one more time to grab the rescue bag and log book. Then, he jumped into

the golf cart. After spinning the wheels once in the mud, the cart jumped forward. Off Jones and Ed drove to the high ropes course.

At the ropes course, Jones unlocked the ladder and took down the lazy lines. The thin nylon pea cord whipped through the air as Jones let them swing down from the climbing anchors fixed to the course over his head. Ed multitasked, visually inspecting the course while throwing bagged ropes under each lazy line swaying in the breeze. Jones dumped a rope out of a bag. After checking the rope, he untied the closest lazy line, placed one end of the pea cord under his foot, and poked the other end through a hole intentionally melted in the end of the climbing rope. Tying a bowline-on-a-bight, he hoisted the rope through a climbing anchor attached to the course. After setting up the ropes, Ed hung them off the ground and out of reach. This was because the course would not be used until the afternoon and he did not want anyone to climb on the course unattended. Then, Jones took down the ladders and locked them up. Ed completed the log book, recording what equipment and what elements were being used today. Then, Outdoor Ed and Jones rolled up the hill in the golf cart.

Initiatives and low ropes

Back at the lodge, Ed grabbed a cup of coffee and went to the office.

“Okay, I’m ready. It’ll be a good day,” Ed told himself. Finishing his coffee, Ed spotted the bus rolling down the centre’s damp gravel road. Ed, Slick, and Jones stepped outside to meet a school bus of high school students. After unloading, Ed chatted with the teacher for a moment about her class. She shared that her group of students knew each other fairly well. Ed nodded. Working with the class as a large group for the few

moments this was clear to Ed, “Yep!” he said, “Slick, they’re really close.” Slick smiled and then broke the class into two groups. Ed and Slick each took a group. Slick then headed to the low ropes course, Jones accompanied for support. Outdoor Ed facilitated some initiative activities.

“I know I’ll run human machine . . . and then partner sequence,” Ed mumbled to himself. “I can stretch that for an hour.” He smiled and then introduced a drama-based activity to the group called Human Machine. He explained the activity as an ice breaker, “used to shake you up.” After telling the group, “Today you may learn something new about each other,” Ed smashed an imaginary sheet of ice. Over giggles from Ed’s dramatic display, he asked the group to divide into three groups of four students. Each group dramatically presented their rendition of a toaster . . . “with sizzle and popping toast.” Everybody laughed. Next, Ed combined the four groups into two bigger groups. Ed asked one group to present a toilet with flush and the other group a blender with chopping food. Each group laughed. To finish off the activity, Ed then formed a large group and asked them to present a rendition of a lawn mower. They did, and everybody laughed. Then, Ed facilitated a teambuilding activity called Partner Sequence, where group members paired with various partners to play a sequence of short games. They laughed some more. Then, Outdoor Ed took them to the low ropes course.

Before entering the low ropes area, the group did trust leans. Ed supervised as each student supported another placing their hands on their partner’s shoulders, and then allowing their partner to lean back, stiff as a board, on the heels of their feet. A female student told Ed that she thought she couldn’t support her partner, a tall male student. Outdoor Ed told her they could support him together. He demonstrated how they could

support her partner, each taking a shoulder with two hands. They tried it twice; first, actually supporting him, and next allowing him to fall from an inch away into their hands. The girl smiled. So did Ed.

Inside the ropes course, Ed challenged his group to solve an initiative he called the Meuse. They were challenged to cross a metaphorical raging river actually made of pine needles, wood chips, and sandy earth. All they had to accomplish this task were a few exposed rocks and four wooden boards. The first question Ed asked the group to do was identify the safety concerns. They identified that the boards were wet, so they felt they would need to take care in crossing. Ed demonstrated a way they could spot the ends of the boards. This could be done by weighing them down with a foot on each end of a board.

"What will happen if you step in the river?" asked a student.

"If you step or fall into the river something will happen to you," Ed replied.

"What's going to happen?" asked another student.

"You'll find out when it does." Ed prompted the students to start the activity. As the students began the activity, Ed spotted the first board weighting it with his foot. A student crossed. Eventually, the group had all four boards set. By that time they had also learned what happened if they fell into the metaphorical raging river. Early on a student had fallen from a poorly set board. He was, figuratively, swept back to the starting point where he quickly remounted the boards.

Continuing, the group moved slowly across the boards. When the group neared the end of the activity they discovered that the final rock was just out of their reach if they placed a board from one rock to the next. What they had to learn was to overlap the

boards in a "T" so that they could reach a distant rock just out of conventional reach. But the students threw the first board into the dirt.

"Ya' we can do that?" a student said.

"We can cross now?" another student asked.

"Your board has been swept away by the river," Ed said.

"What - wait a minu-" On the three remaining boards the students cowered worrying about a board breaking under their weight.

"They're bending. Oh!"

"They can support about four adults," Ed said. After testing the amount of weight each remaining board could support, the group finally solved the problem and crossed the boards to build a bridge to the final rock. The group shuffled across, each jumping from the final rock like they were hopping onto shore.

"What next?" a student asked Ed.

"Well, we can do the Two Ships Crossing."

Outdoor Ed facilitated a quick use of the Two Ships Crossing element. He demonstrated how to spot participants. Doing leans out from the element, he encouraged students to test spotting his weight on the wires because he felt the group needed to feel the weight of a human before spotting each other. Ed gave them the rules and, "let 'em rip." Two male students attempted the element first. They were also the first to spill while doing this element. Ed re-emphasized that spotting is about absorbing people's weight and preventing hard falls, not stopping falls. These spills provided a good time to talk and discuss the issue.

Ed asked the question, "What just happened here?"

One group member said the group was, “getting overconfident.”

Another said the group was, “getting cocky.” Ed nodded. To Ed’s surprise, the two male students remounted the element and started asking their peers “to keep on spotting.”

At the end of the low ropes session, Slick returned and held a large group debrief with Ed’s group at the pentagon benches. Ed and Slick ended the morning hearing the group state key words such as communication, holding up their own, supporting others, and teamwork.

Ed asked, “How does that relate to your lives at school?” The students commented on experiences in sports teams. Ed tried to broaden the topic, encouraging students to draw other examples from their school lives. The students continued to comment on experiences in sports teams. So, Ed ended the debrief the experience and lead the group up for lunch.

High Ropes

After lunch Ed, Slick, and Jones took the class to the high ropes course. Standing in front of a circle of harnesses, spread out on the ground, Ed hoped that Jones or Slick would take a moment to explain how to put on the equipment. He was growing tired of explaining to participants how to put on the climbing equipment. He reflected on how Jones and Slick declined daily, saying, “Ed, you do a better job at it.” So, Ed tried to involve them explaining the instructions. He tried asking for their input on how to put on the harnesses. However, when Ed tried this tactic, they both stood silently beside their participants with their arms folded. Ed felt that this made the participant’s uncomfortable.

The teacher shared with Ed their lack of confidence in these two instructors because of their behaviour. Ed reassured the teacher that these two instructors were trained to operate the high ropes course. His comments comforted the teacher, but made Ed uncomfortable . . . *Did they really know what they were doing?* Ed thought.

After this experience, Ed felt he couldn't have fun with Jones and Slick the same way he did with more experienced staff. There seemed to be a divide between the younger staff and the more experienced staff. Ed thought, it's an edge of maturity that allows me to make things fun by engaging my peers in play with instructions. This will obviously not be possible with these two younger staff members. Ed didn't know what to do about this situation. Seeing as these two younger instructors were going to be the centre's summer camp ropes course operators, he felt that they should do their fair share of providing instructions at high ropes during outdoor education programs to gain experience before the summer started. After all, Ed would not be there; he would be running his own summer outdoor education programs for the public, conference centre groups, and the corporate groups.

That morning, frustrated after they both again declined, Ed indicated that he had to go to the bathroom just as the students got their climbing harnesses. Peeling off his harness, he asked them if they could cover the instructors. They both said, "yes." Ed took off to the washroom, leaving his two young peers on the spot. With a class of 24 students and a teacher staring at them, they started. Reflecting on this tactic, Ed thought he had made a good decision. He didn't like using deception to encourage staff members to take initiative. However, it did motivate them to take the lead and provide instruction. Ed felt it was an important action to take. Returning from the bathroom, Ed stood and

talked quietly with the teacher as Slick and Jones instructed the students on how to fit a climbing harness. Then, Ed introduced the high ropes elements: the Team Balance and the Pamper Pole. He explained how the students would be connected the climbing rope, how the belay system worked to take in the slack of the rope so that the climbers would only fall the distance of the stretch of the rope. He briefed the group on the commands they were supposed to go over before they climbed

“Are you on belay?” each climber was expected to ask.

“Yes,” the student belay team was expected to answer.

“Am I ready to climb?” each climber was expected to ask.

“Climb away,” was the expected answer. The first student began to mount the ladder.

“Whoa!?” Jones said. “Don’t you have some questions to ask?”

“Oh, yeah,” the student stepped off the ladder. “What am I supposed to say?”

Jones sighed. “First ask your climber if you are on belay?” prompted Jones.

“Are you on belay?” said the student.

“Yes,” said the student belay team. The student stepped back on the ladder.

“Whoa!?” said Jones again. “What is the next question you are going to ask?”

“Another question – Oh . . . what is it?” asked the student.

Again, Jones sighed. “Ask your belay team if you are ready to climb?”

“Are you ready to climb?” asked the student.

“Yes,” said the student belay team. Then the climber began to climb. Ed laughed, then sighed at Jones’ ordeal. Over a short time he had started to recognize this pattern. He laughed because he’d used these same instructions for years. But now he

realized that these commands didn't prepare his participants to climb, especially since most participants had not even seen a ropes course before. Ed had been thinking: *as instructors we expect participants to learn the questions after the very first time we tell them. Do we need these questions? Do we need our participants to ask these questions?* For Ed, this felt redundant. He thought *I'm tired of asking participants to ask their belay team if they can climb. That feels like coercion. I think I'd rather ask the participants questions like: Do you think these guys are ready to belay you? Are you ready to climb? And go head.* Preparing his first student at the Pamper Pole, he did so. The pre-climb experience ran smoother.

"I'm going to trust you" was something Ed heard many times from the students. Grey clouds swirled above the ropes course, as the sky began to spit rain. Ed thought: this is going to test their confidence today. As Ed tied students to the Pamper Pole rope, he made it a point to explain what he was doing. Ed was surprised two students came over to assist him belay their classmates. On the ground Ed began to provide commentary to the two students about what went on in his mind when he climbed this element. Ed asked them to give verbal help to assist the climber. They gave verbal support, providing ideas on where the climber could place his feet. Ed would wait until the climber was at the point where he would stop, pause, and look at the small stump he was about to stand on. At that point, Ed would ask him what he was thinking. He usually got one of two answers: "I'm not thinking" or "How am I going to stand on this?" Ed felt his questions externalized the climber's experience for the two students belaying. He thought this involved the belayers, more profoundly, in the experience. At the end of the ropes course program Jones went with the group to conduct a final group debrief for

the day. Slick and Outdoor Ed stayed to clean up the ropes gear. Once the ropes were taken down, coiled, and packed, Ed started the golf cart. Slick jumped in, placing the harnesses and helmets in the cab. Ed laughed

“What?” said Slick.

“Your rope coil is messy, but it works.” Slick nodded and Ed laughed. “Hey man, I used to make messy coils when I started to learn that technique. We all got to start somewhere, eh!” After putting the equipment away they went up the hill in the golf cart. Slick and Ed met up with Jones in the office. Jones had completed the staff debrief form. He informed them that the students and teachers had already left. “Done, only 2 more days to go,” said Ed. Then, he went to his cabin, met up with his cabin mates the kitchen staff, and enjoyed a beer.

Program Maintenance Day

At breakfast the next morning, Ed was excited to have a program maintenance day. On these days he worked on tasks to maintain and improve the outdoor education department. On his list for today he was rebuilding the centre's abandoned survival course. For this environmental education activity, students simulated the role of an animal in the forest either being an herbivore, omnivore, or carnivore. Students were then challenged to survive for an hour in the forest, preying on each other, looking for water and food. The survival course had been torn down since last fall and hadn't yet been reconstructed. So, Outdoor Ed decided he would rebuild it.

First, he stripped the old peeling paint off the metal washers used as life rings in the game. Then, he laid them out on a large piece of paper and spray painted them: some

green, some yellow, some red. Second, he painted new blocks for the survival course because some blocks had been broken. Next, he glued dominoes on the survival blocks as orienteering markers so that the students could make a rubbing to confirm they had really found a food or water marker. By that time the survival rings had dried, so he put the dry rings on the ring clips. Then he made a master sheet of all the dominoes kids had the potential to rub. He then stopped by maintenance and borrowed a nail gun. Then, he went to the new area for the course and put up all 24 blocks.

Next, Ed relaxed, listening to a favorite music album as he worked on developing a grade 11 and 12 biology program. He was trying to design a program where students could test macro-invertebrates from the local creek as bio-indicators of its water quality. Ed was working on fitting this program to the Ontario curriculum standards. To start, Ed had already downloaded, collected, and read ministry documents and academic resources on the subject. He had written a rough draft for the program, and took it to the centre's curriculum expert who was awestruck. However, she explained that there must have been a communication error, that all she wanted to know was which curriculum expectations could be linked to the centre's existing programs. With that information she would then enter this data into a database she organized, so that she could tell teachers what programs related to the curriculum expectations they were currently teaching. This took Ed 30 seconds to do.

He showed her a summative rubric he had written up for the grade 11 and 12 biology program based on the existing stream studies program. When the curriculum expert saw the rubric, she said, "A rubric. Cool! Why didn't I think of this?" Outdoor Ed and the curriculum expert agreed that marking rubrics are something teachers could use

to justify their programs. They agreed it could help sell their programs. By this time it was the end of the day.

“One more day to go,” said Ed and went to his cabin.

The Zip Line

The next morning Ed was smiling. It was Saturday and starting tonight he had 3 days off. Also, today was strictly a high ropes day using the Zip Line. This was a big event for Ed. For most of the day he would be standing on a platform, 40 feet in the sky on the big high ropes course. After breakfast, the day started early, Slick and Outdoor Ed went down and set up the zip line. The group arrived shortly before lunch. Ed and Slick met the group.

After lunch at the high ropes course, Ed stood on the zip line platform, 40 feet in the air, in the rain. It was cold and Ed needed to pee. Determined, Ed completed his tasks: (a) changing belay systems for participants from a dynamic belay system to the zip pulley system, and (b) coaching climbers onto the platform where he was standing. Speaking with his clients prior to climbing up to the platform, Ed heard several of them say, “it doesn’t look that high from the ground.” Ed chuckled when they reached the platform and: (a) got nervous just trying to stand on the platform, or (b) got nervous on the platform after looking out at the large dipping wire, 45 feet above the ground, that they would be zipping on. Ed told himself often, “It’s a novel experience for them.” To comfort them, he used a clear and calm approach where he explained what he was doing as he changed a participant’s belay system to the zip line system. “I’m clipping the zip

system into your belay rappel loop. I'm going to show you how each carabineer is locked. Then I will call the same out to Slick below. Slick, you ready?"

"Yeah, ready?" Slick said.

"Yeah, zip one locked, down. Zip two locked, down. Chest locked, down. Belay rappel loop one locked, down. Belay rappel two locked, opposed and down. Can I take Sir off dynamic belay?" Ed asked. What was interesting was that the group responded positively to the staff's constant system checks. It allowed participants about to zip time to reflect on how the system would hold them. Ed felt his communication with Slick emphasized their knowledge. In turn, it encouraged a few participants to challenge themselves and go for, *the zip*. Also, Ed felt the rain provided them with street credentials. This was because Ed and Slick acted as cheery, professional people even when it was rainy outside. Really Ed didn't mind the rain, but this group complained of being cold and wet even though they wanted to do the activity and did successfully.

Helping Out and Passing on Knowledge

After the zip line, Outdoor Ed went down to the new low ropes course with the Outdoor Education supervisor. Along the way, Ed spoke with his supervisor about Slick and Jones. He was concerned that these two camp staff were going to make a hard transition from outdoor education staff to camp staff when the summer started. It upset him that over the week they had been uncooperative in sharing the responsibility for providing instructions at the high ropes course. Talking with his supervisor about this incident, his supervisor agreed that it would take some time for them to make the

transition. She argued that when they moved departments it was going to be the little, incidental things that were going to play havoc on their days.

They went to the new archery course in Hawk Meadow. They dropped off two foam archery targets then walked to the new low ropes course. His supervisor showed Ed the new trust steps and told him about how Slick had put up the spider's web wrong so she would have to take it down. Then, his supervisor showed Ed the A-Frame he had asked to be built. She asked Ed how he would use it. Ed told her he would raise a participant on the A-Frame balancing it from the top with several people holding several long ropes. Then, try and walk the frame between 1 to 10 steps depending on what the participant wanted to do. His supervisor thanked him for explaining to her how he used the element. Then they took the golf cart to the main lodge. It was 4:30; Ed was done work.

"I'm getting out of here!" he said and left the centre for his time off.

Discussing Simon's Story

"That's the end of my story." Simon took a seat close to the fire. For a moment we were silent. The fire cracked. I took a sip of my beer and then started to wave my finger.

"You know, as I was listening to your story . . . all I was thinking was how Outdoor Ed stood as a metaphor for the state of outdoor education," I said. Simon nodded. "My recent experiences working in outdoor education have focused on using initiatives, low ropes and high ropes, often for *teambuilding* or *leadership* development. I used to enjoy the intensity of these activities and thought I was doing an important job. But over time I've come to feel these experiences are contrived. I've become concerned that outdoor education is moving towards the ropes course and away from the outdoors."

"James, I don't agree," said Simon. "It's not that outdoor education is heading towards the ropes course. But there is something afoot in the field. Ropes courses are part of that phenomenon. I'm arguing that it's the field of outdoor education and its universal ideas about character building. Brookes²² calls this the neo-Hahnian outdoor adventure education discourse (NH OAE). He defines it, *as outdoor education centred on the notion that the "character" of individuals could be "built" by certain one-off outdoor experiences.*²³ Returning to my story for a moment, remember when Ed was trying to sell the idea of personal growth during the initiatives program with the gang exit group?"

"Yes, that didn't turn out so well," I said.

²² (Brookes, 2003a).

²³ (Beames, 2006; Brookes, 2003a, p. 119).

“Good point, I want to return to that in a moment,” Simon said, swinging his pointer. “But remember the type of experience he was trying to deliver during his initiatives session with the gang exit program. He tried to convince his participants that his program was *a great opportunity for groups to work together, build trust and communication . . . in a setting that promotes personal growth*.²⁴ Personal growth is considered a product of adventure education.²⁵ Priest argues that adventure education is an area of outdoor education concerned with using challenging high adventure experiences to create new growth experiences interpersonally (between people) or intrapersonally (with the self)” said Simon.

“What?” I replied with a grin. Simon smiled.

“Okay, I get it. Priest uses fancy terms. Basically it’s concerned with using outdoor pursuits or artificial adventure environments like ropes courses to provide people with challenging tasks to accomplish. Priest²⁶ argues that people learn a great deal about themselves and others when they learn to overcome any self-imposed perceptions about their abilities to succeed. This is done when they learn to overcome these challenges and solve the task. In other words, adventure education is supposed to build character. But, what the example from the gang exit program demonstrates is Brookes’²⁷ NH OAE discourse. Brookes argues the idea that personal behaviour traits in one situation (outdoor adventure education) could be used to predict behaviour in a different situation (the workplace) . . . *is flawed*. Outdoor adventure programs may well shape behaviour

²⁴ (Ibid).

²⁵ (Priest, 1990, 1999)

²⁶ (Priest, 1990, 1999).

²⁷ (Brookes, 2003a).

during the program, and *may well influence what participants believe about themselves, and may well teach certain skills or knowledge, what they do not do is build character.*²⁸

“That’s obvious. Hey, did you know the word character comes from old French and late Latin, meaning instrument for marking or to impress? Only later did people begin to use it in connection with ideas like the sum of mental and moral qualities,²⁹ or NH OAE.³⁰ It was definitely clear the gang exit participants weren’t impressed,” I said. “During Ed’s debrief its clear these participants were not going to buy into Ed’s dialogue about promoting personal growth. Speaking with the participants, it was clear that they felt they had been treated like children. Participating in a bunch of initiative games was not what they expected as part of their program. Like Newbery³¹ argues, I too have *begun to realize how culturally specific the lure of adventure is*. What Ed was trying to promote was designed to be accepted by everyone, a universal approach . . . right?” I asked. I wanted to be sure.

“Yep! If you mean using the same general program for all participants.” Simon said.

“Yes, I do. So, the irony is that universal approaches are not what this group expected. They expected a program geared towards them and how they do things,” I said. Simon nodded.

²⁸ (Brookes, 2003a, p. 199).

²⁹ (Hoad, 1996).

³⁰ (Brookes, 2003a).

³¹ (Newbery, 2000, p. 13).

“Yes,” said Simon. “The initiatives and ropes course programs Outdoor Ed ran are what Loynes³² describes as adventures in a bun . . . or as you describe: universal programs. To provoke discussion, Loynes³³ argued that adventures in a bun are examples of how our society has changed due to a division in outdoor adventure education between community values and marketplace values. He argues that outdoor adventure education, recreation, and training are transforming into another form of recreational capitalism. Kinda’ like what your school trustees were trying to accomplish with the outdoor centres in Ontario by charging user fees. His adventure in a bun idea is inspired by a book called *The McDonaldisation of Society* by Ritzer³⁴. Ritzer proposes life’s experiences are becoming increasingly provided as a standard, dependable, safe product like the McDonald’s hamburger. He argues that as life becomes commodified by putting life in the market place, society suffers.”

“Bummer,” I said. “Newbery³⁵ describes this type of approach as imposing, not learning. In an article she wrote in *Pathways*, she described how a female Outward Bound instructor told her a story about how she was trying to convince a kid that carrying a heavy pack and going on a hike would help him work through ‘stuff’. The kid replied, telling her he walked every day. He didn’t have a car, so that was how he got around. He carried a heavy pack too, so he asked her why the hike was any different from a forced internment camp. The outdoor instructor didn’t know how to respond.”

³² (Loynes, 2002).

³³ (Loynes, 2002).

³⁴ (Ritzer, 1993).

³⁵ (Newbery, 2000)

“Yeah,” said Simon. “That happens all too often. Many instructors don’t even think about it. This is some of the programming I facilitated during my first years in the field of outdoor adventure education. The 1990s were good to me as an outdoor educator. They were good because I was sure of what I was doing because I followed the gospel according to *Islands of Healing* (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988), *Adventure Education* (Miles & Priest, 1990), and its reprint *Adventure Programming* (Priest & Gass, 1997).”³⁶

“Guided by rhetoric?” asked Lou.

“Yep!” said Simon. “Just like the belief James demonstrated in his presentation. You know? How several people argue that the only chance urban youth get to experience nature happens at outdoor education centres. Similar arguments can be made based on other beliefs shaped by popularized literature.”

“Yeah, I like that argument,” replied Lou. “Did you know that *Adventure Education*³⁷ is one of the texts Brookes³⁸ reviewed in a study where he examined the discourse in outdoor education textbooks. He found many texts use universal terms that are incapable of resolving questions regarding the educational worth of outdoor education. Instead, often these texts *used rhetorical devices that: (a) treated education as personal development with only limited acknowledgement of the contexts and social functions of education; (b) treating the outdoors as monolithic or omitting the outdoors from the author’s aims and purposes for outdoor education; and (c) describing the aims*

³⁶ (Beames, 2006, p. 4).

³⁷ (Miles & Priest, 1990).

³⁸ (Brookes, 2004, p. 22).

and purposes in abstract and broad terms. For example, Brookes³⁹ argues that in Miles and Priest's introduction they make it clear that their use of broad, abstract aims is intended to illustrate the conscious and overt goal of adventure, which *is to expand the self, to learn and grow and progress towards the realization of human potential.* Miles and Priest⁴⁰ argue that adventure programs may teach skills, such as canoeing, but the primary goal is not skill development itself, but learning about the self and the world derived from engaging in such activities."

"Yes," Simon replied "and it's this approach that I often used in the 90s as a *schoolteacher and outdoor education fundamentalist, where I would eagerly stand on my soapbox and unashamedly try to convince parents and administrators that I would sort out their teenagers during a two-week canoe trip.*"⁴¹ Loynes⁴² illustrates a similar example, claiming that one outdoor experiential education provider *confided they could sell any programme provided it was a two day ropes course experience.* Returning to our discussion regarding our field's discourse, I feel it's important to point out that Brookes⁴³ was exploring, *the relationship or lack of it, as the case may be – between outdoor education discourse and curriculum discourse.* Brookes argues that these texts are evidence that outdoor education theory and research have failed to properly consider how outdoor education could be justified educationally. This¹ is because outdoor education theory is often overly concerned with the question of indispensability, or the benefits of outdoor education. He states that it's not conclusive that outdoor education achieves

³⁹ (Brookes, 2004, p. 22).

⁴⁰ (Miles & Priest, 1999)

⁴¹ (Beames, 2006, p. 9).

⁴² (Loynes, 2002, p. 117).

⁴³ (Brookes, 2004, p. 23).

unique educational benefits, *although recognizing the outdoors as just one of several alternatives may lend more circumspection to the promotion of outdoor education programs.*"⁴⁴

"That's probably what Outdoor Ed was experiencing," I said. "A state of dissonance regarding the educational value of the programs he was providing in relation to their situational expectations. For example, remember at the start of Simon's story when Ed laughs at the irony that his client hadn't *got back* to them about the program, so his supervisor guessed what the group wanted. He laughed because his centre's brochure indicated, *our staff will work with your team to design a program specific to your needs and desired outcomes*. But that didn't happen, and prior to working with the group, he didn't know what the needs and desired outcomes the participants were expecting, so he provided a general or universal approach towards the visiting group. This approach didn't seem to work for them. But on other days he would be advised that the client expected him to focus on teamwork. The vague nature of the term frustrated Ed, only perpetuating distaste for the programs he provided. This is evident in his ongoing countdown to his time off away from work."

"Well, what's more evident here James" Mike interjected, "is *not* that Outdoor Ed was simply frustrated or experiencing a state of dissonance, it's important to look deeper at the issues Ed was experiencing in his practice, this adventure in a bun approach in outdoor education and the vague nature regarding the dominant conceptions for outdoor education. As a colleague of mine, Bob Henderson⁴⁵ argues, *I am of the view that nature*

⁴⁴ (Brookes, 2004, p. 23).

⁴⁵ (Henderson, 2007, p. 4).

in North American outdoor education and recreation is all-too-easily lost in the mania of skill development, personal growth and technological conveniences. Nature becomes a backdrop, perhaps even a sparring partner to test one's skills and resources. The self is the focus, but not the 'Self' in nature. Simon's story is full of pre-occupations with the technical manipulation of ropes course devices. For example: (a) setting up high ropes courses; (b) observing how participants use the low ropes equipment like the Meuse; and (c) the commands shouted out during the zip line to ensure that he affixed them to the zip pulley properly. But at the same time, Outdoor Ed is also a character interested in using the outdoors to teach biology lessons. Remember his desire to develop a grade 11 and 12 biology program using macro invertebrates as bio-indicators of water quality? Ironically, it's the sublimity of the ropes courses that seems to be attracting the clients to his centre. But what's important to note here is that Outdoor Ed comprises two central ways the outdoors is used to educate people, field studies (environmental education) and outdoor pursuits (adventure activities)⁴⁶."

"Ah! Drasdo, I just read his essay. Interesting read. Didn't he argue that the use of the outdoors for educational purposes was usually contrived as divided between these two groups?"⁴⁷ I said.

"Yes," agreed Mike. "But what Drasdo⁴⁸ argues is that this contrived divide in outdoor education between adventure education and environmental education is a myth or better yet described as a metaphor. Referring back to the study that you spoke about Lou, it's in the outdoor education literature that this divide can often be clearly seen.

⁴⁶ (Drasdo, 1973).

⁴⁷ (Ibid).

⁴⁸ (Ibid).

Take Priest's Chapter 14: *The Semantics of Adventure Programming* in his text *Adventure Programming*. In this chapter Priest provides definitions for several key adventure programming terms. But what he does at the beginning of his chapter before he introduces these terms is perpetuate this divide. Priest⁴⁹ argues that, *historically, two branches of outdoor education have been identified: environmental education and adventure education*. From there he defines environmental education as concerned with two relationships: ecosystemic and ekistic—"Mike stopped for a moment as I put up my hand. He waved at me to continue.

*"Ecosystemic relationships refer to the interdependence of living organisms in an ecological microclimate; in other words, basic biological concepts like the web of life, the food chain, and the energy pyramid. Ekistic relationships refer to the key interactions between human society and the nature resources of an environment,"*⁵⁰ I said.

"Very good," said Simon.

"Yes," said Mike. "Sounds like you've memorized the text." I smiled and nodded. "But, did you ever notice how Priest⁵¹ places his description of environmental education before his definition of adventure education. This allows him to ignore writing further about the environment and its educational value, instead allowing him to focus more exclusively on the outdoor pursuit aspects of Drásdo's⁵² metaphorical divide. Linking this back to the study Lou was talking about by Brookes,⁵³ in Priest's⁵⁴ chapter

⁴⁹ (Priest, 1999, p. 111).

⁵⁰ (Priest, 1999, p. 111).

⁵¹ (Priest, 1999).

⁵² (Drásdo, 1973).

⁵³ (Brookes, 2004).

⁵⁴ (Priest, 1999).

the environment is treated as both something non-human (divided from human society) and monolithic. It's interesting to note that the only other place he writes specifically about the outdoor environment is when he defines environmental dangers. James, do you know that description off the top of your head?" asked Mike.

"Yes: *dangers (perils and hazards) may also come from the natural surroundings. Avalanches, whitewater rapids, poisonous plants or animals, and temperature extremes are all examples of environmental dangers. These are said to be objective or not controllable by the group and their leader.*"⁵⁵ I recited.

"Thanks. Take his description of environmental dangers. For Priest,⁵⁶ the environment is described as uncontrollable. Being uncontrollable, it's ignored, while other elements that can be controlled, like the choice of outdoor pursuits, equipment, or people themselves, are focused on. It seems too often, and I'm generalizing here, that many writers and scholars contributing to the field of outdoor education are more interested in writing about what they can control, instead of what they can't," Mike argued. "For example, remember when Outdoor Ed was introducing the Meuse to his participants? When the participants asked what would happen if they stepped on the ground Ed indicated only that something would happen. He was controlling the situation. At the ropes course, remember when Jones was asking¹ his participant to ask his class questions before he climbed? Again, this instructor was controlling the situation. Finally, when Outdoor Ed coached participants at the low ropes course, the high ropes course, and the zip line? In all these situations he was trying to control the situation.

⁵⁵ (Priest, 1999, p. 113).

⁵⁶ (Priest, 1999)

Sometimes I feel too many outdoor educators try to control situations in their programs; instead, it's more important that outdoor educators should reflect on their own actions as practitioners."

"I think you're making some good points, 'Mike, but I feel it's still important to have instructors who are in control of facilitating outdoor education programs and their activities. That's because, *adventures in buns as well as adventures to be planned by participants still need competent staff to oversee them — competent in relation to activity*"⁵⁷ Simon argued.

"Hold on Simon," Lou interrupted. "That's not what Mike said. He said that outdoor educators need to be aware of their own actions. That they need to reflect on their actions instead of always trying to *just* control the situation. I agree with you that outdoor educators need to be competent in relation to the activities they provide. But I think what Mike is trying to say is that it's more important that outdoor educators are aware of what they're doing, before they consider what they need to control. Remember how Outdoor Ed reflected and changed the way he spoke to participants before they began climbing on the Pamper Pole after listening to the way Jones' participant responded to him? When I was listening to the story, it was interesting to hear how the participant responded to Jones after he asked the student to ask him, 'Now ask me if you are ready to climb?' The participant asked Jones, 'Are you ready to climb?' He asked Jones if Jones was ready to climb and Jones responded, 'Yes.' He was unaware of how his actions were influencing the situation. Jones was merely trying to control it. As an

⁵⁷ (Beames, 2006, p. 8).

educator, I feel it's important to reflect on these types of experiences like Outdoor Ed did. Be aware of our actions and those of our peers. So that we can change our responses in the moment, so our actions are more connected to the immediate situation that everyone is involved in.

"Maybe that's why Hattie, Marsh, Neil, and Richards'⁵⁸ meta analysis of adventure education programs that substantiated that outdoor adventure education programs promote interpersonal growth and intrapersonal growth, argued in 1997 that future research should focus on the effects of the instructors in adventure education, and, in extension, outdoor education. There is little research out there about the people running outdoor education programs, but a lot about how outdoor education can act as a beneficial form of character development." I argued, "Even the recommendations in C.O.E.O.'s latest research document urge postgraduate schools of Canadian universities, *to promote further Canadian-based research into the various powerful and lasting benefits of OEE for all elementary and secondary students.*⁵⁹ But it does not recommend any investigations into the people providing outdoor education. This is disconcerting after our discussion and what I discovered about the value that school boards and the government have for qualified outdoor educators. It makes me wonder if all the literature out there telling outdoor educators what to do is really¹relevant to their practice?"

"I don't know the answer to that question. But from my own experience what I do know is that programs without predetermined outcomes are a tough sell to those who provide funding." Simon explained. "You have to understand that when groups, like

⁵⁸ (Hattie et al., 1997).

⁵⁹ (Foster & Linney, 2007, p. 66).

C.O.E.O., recommend that researchers study the benefits of outdoor education: (a) the authors have written this booklet as a promotional document for an external audience,⁶⁰ and (b) what the authors are asking for are predetermined outcomes they can describe to funding groups like the Ontario government.⁶¹ They're doing their part as an organization to make *outdoor education* a more recognized part of the mainstream Ontario education system."

"Okay, but what about the research they are recommending that University postgraduates and graduate students engage in?" I asked.

"Well, that's part of the problem. I believe in qualitative research which focuses on understanding people's experiences. I am not a fan of using scientific methods, like psychometric tests, to discover whether someone has increased their life effectiveness.⁶² Take, for example, the Hattie et al.'s⁶³ meta-analysis of 96 studies focusing on adventure education and Outward Bound programs. The sample the authors drew from was derived from a search of online databases such as ERIC, Dissertation Abstracts International and PsychLIT," said Simon

"PsychLIT? That's a psychology database. The authors specifically searched a psychology database. Well, doesn't that show a significant bias! Why didn't they search other databases in other fields?" I asked.

"The study doesn't say." Simon replied.

"Bummer," I said.

⁶⁰ (Sharpe, personal communication, March 6, 2009)

⁶¹ (Foster & Linney, 2007).

⁶² (Beames, 2006).

⁶³ (Hattie et al., 1997).

“What I can tell you is that many of the studies used psychometric tests to measure psychological attributes like self-concept, locus of control, or leadership. The authors concluded that *in contrast to most educational research*, adventure education programs showed immediate and short-term gains in these attributes, followed by more substantial gains during follow-up assessments after programs had ended.⁶⁴ It’s interesting to point out though, that the authors did not mention what other educational research they were contrasting their meta-analysis against. Educational research covers a vast and integrated field. However, most of the studies cited in their references either only made mention of adventure education style programs, or journals which often publish research on adventure education. This illustrates how adventure education research often preaches positive benefits and argues that these findings contrast conventional education research, while not actually doing it. The funny thing is that in this journal article one of the key articles that Foster and Linney⁶⁵ use to substantiate their recommendations that character work is a beneficial aspect in outdoor education programs,” Simon explained.

“No way, really? I thought something was fishy about their use of that article. No wonder Ontario governments have been so wary to fund, let alone even recognize outdoor education as an aspect of education that is more than a frill. Much of the research seems more like it’s trying to advertise the sociopsychological benefits of outdoor education and adventure education, instead of actually proving or disproving its educational effectiveness,” I said.

⁶⁴ (Hattie et al., 1997).

⁶⁵ (Foster & Linney, 2007).

“The ironic thing is that the authors said the same, arguing that many of the articles they reviewed for their meta-analysis read like program advertisements.⁶⁶ I argue that we need to move away from this type of research and, instead, observe people and listen to their stories. This can be valuable research, but it also needs to be trustworthy for academics. That means it needs to be executed with great rigour,” Simon explained.

“Well, after presenting my research this morning that’s one thing I’ve learned I need to focus on in my future as an academic,” I commented.

Rigorous Research?

“That’s okay, James. You’re just a graduate student. What you presented was good information. Just remember what you’ve learned and be more rigorous next time. Returning to the issue of rigor, from my experience this is an aspect of research that funders don’t appear to understand. That credible, rigorous research in outdoor education doesn’t have to rely on experimental research designs.⁶⁷ For myself, I don’t support programs that coerce participant attendance with the aim of educating predetermined inter or intrapersonal outcomes. I am happy to run a course that seeks to yield personal growth, but only if I can involve the participants in the process. That way the term personal growth will be meaningful for them.” Simon argued.

“Hold on Simon,” said Lou. “As an outdoor educator I agree with your argument, but I don’t think we should devalue the existing literature . . . too much. There has been a

⁶⁶ (Hattie et al., 1997).

⁶⁷ (Beames, 2006).

lot of good work done, even if it needs to be critiqued. That's what I argue. There's a need for critical methods and methodologies to be used in this field. This means that as outdoor educators and its researchers we need to be critical of our own practices, and evaluate our effectiveness. Not just ask how the experiences we provide benefit the participants, but ask what do we do? How we do it? Is what we do really educational? Like Brookes⁶⁸ argues, too often outdoor education literature is focused on the topic of arguing its indispensability, instead of looking at its effectiveness educationally. It's not just the programs people need to research, but the people running the programs.

"For instance, I developed a course for a Graduate Diploma of Outdoor and Environmental Education in 2000.⁶⁹ It included a course on environmental interpretation. The objectives advertised 'cultural interpretation', but really the focus was the interpretation of the natural environment. Emphasis was on understanding and interpreting ecological principles and features. The unit was broken up into areas such as non-flowering plants, invertebrate fauna, vertebrate fauna, geology and landscape, and more. Interpretation was narrowly defined as environmental science, assuming a rationalist approach. Typical of mainstream environmental education, the content included abstract scientific knowledge about the environment. This was transmitted by guest speakers who were authorities in their field. This approach assumed that the learner was a passive consumer of information and that a tangible body of knowledge needed to be transmitted. Sadly, at the end of the

⁶⁸ (Brookes, 2004).

⁶⁹ (Preston, 2004).

course, several students indicated in the course evaluations that the speakers provided a significant amount of relevant information in their areas of specialization, but most students felt the course did not provide them with any useful skills or information for the real world. This was a critical moment when I reconsidered how I should teach the course. Because as an educator, I feel it's pointless to teach students a bunch of facts if they feel their not going to use them,"⁷⁰ Said Lou.

"Oh . . . just like Johnson and Wattchow's⁷¹ study about student's perspectives of the Camp Mallana outdoor education experience. In that study outdoor centre students responded they felt, *more appreciative of their natural surroundings . . . They were happy to partake in new minimal impact behaviours and make an active effort to 'improve' the environment they temporarily inhabited.* But in this environment they could see their immediate impacts, just like when students participate in an educational course they see an impact in their efforts through their grades. But beyond the natural environment of the Mallana outdoor education program, students felt that what they learned about minimal impact skills was inapplicable to their lives in the city. Maybe, if the instructors at Mallana had conducted research on their own actions they may have realized this," I said.

"James, I agree. That's why in contrast to my previous unit where the environment formed the interpretive background," said Lou. "My co-instructor Amma and I redesigned my course so that it focused on teaching student's useable skills to read the landscape where they were and interpret their role as part of it, instead of

⁷⁰ (Preston, 2004).

⁷¹ (Johnson & Wattchow, 2004, p. 8).

trying to teach ideas like the principles of Leave No Trace. We planned to allow the place students were exploring to play a leading role in the learning experience.⁷² We aimed for direct involvement with the landscape and an awareness of the many ways of knowing places. After all, teaching students that living and travelling with nature, for example, floating down a river or following animal tracks, can provide possibilities for greater connections to be made between people and the outdoors. So, instead of trying to develop environmental awareness through identifying components of the natural world, we aimed to develop connections with particular places. We wanted students to engage in the whole experience rather than accentuating the dualistic idea that humans and nature are separate entities, like you discovered in your study, James.”

“Hum,” I said.

“I get that,” said Mike. “I agree, too often outdoor educators are concerned more about educating how people are to negotiate and control themselves in natural environments, rather than teaching students how to read the landscape. I think that’s what you might have been trying to tell us, Simon, when you told us your story. Remember how Outdoor Ed was trying to develop a biology program for high school students that would teach them to use aquatic organisms as bio-indicators of water quality in local water sources. That’s something that students could take back to their home environments. Be it the city, the countryside, or even the bush. He was in the process of constructing something educational. Shame he was only in the process of designing the course. Like Ed, I feel that many front-line outdoor educators get caught up, including me

⁷² (Preston, 2004).

early in my career, in focusing on adventuring on and across the landscape, instead of learning how to engage with the landscape. Be it a natural or human landscape,” said Mike.

“I describe that as developing an appreciation for our environment. The immediate one we’re in,” said Lou.

“As a lifeguard, I agree,” I interjected. “Even in the constructed environment of a city pool or water park it was important for me to be able to scan, interpret, and appreciate the environment I’m in. My skills in being able to read the landscape around me, instead of just providing an activity, allow me to provide not only positive experiences for the patrons visiting the pool, but also comforting quality experiences for the community of people I am a part of at that moment. I argue it’s an art to be able to read a landscape. Remember how the participants told Outdoor Ed that the Zip Line didn’t look that high from the ground. He interpreted the ecology of that social and physical landscape. When participants reached the platform, he changed his approach and used a calm voice to explain to participants what he was doing. He did the same at the Pamper Pole, when he decided to use a conversational approach with his clients. He was also reading the landscape there,” I argued.

“James, that’s exactly why my co-instructor and I were cautious of using adventure activities such as white-water paddling and rock climbing. From our experiences, we felt that too often environment often becomes a backdrop to these activities. Too often we had seen students new to these adventurous activities focus their attention on the activity and themselves, rather than the environment. This was not the objective we wanted for our course or our unit when we visited a natural area. So, we considered carefully the means of travel we were going to use to explore the

natural area we planned to visit, one where students could feel more comfortable in the environment instead of being distracted from it. Cycling, flat-water paddling, and bushwalking were considered. Factors, like logistics and the sense that walking would give us a slower, close-up encounter with the land, lead us to journey on foot,⁷³” said Lou.

“That’s what Drasdo⁷⁴ was writing about back in 1973. He argued that whether people were interested in participating in adventure sports or conducting fieldwork, there is another dimension that is important, the dimension of comfort,” I said.

“That’s contrary to what Priest⁷⁵ argues. Saying the use of high intensity challenges can promote people to learn to overcome their self-imposed perceptions of their inabilities to succeed. Isn’t it interesting how authors, like Drasdo, aren’t mentioned by authors like Priest?” said Lou.

“Yeah, and Priest⁷⁶ wrote a lot about adventure education as something developed through programs like Outward Bound,” I argued, “The same programs that Drasdo⁷⁷ was working and writing for. What he valued was young people walking up a rock climb, who kept up a stream of questions about the natural history of the area such as the evidence of copper mining or sheep farming they saw, or whatever took their eyes. Drasdo⁷⁸ argued that he had no doubt their involvement was greater. That they were learning, rather than members some of groups he saw straggling behind their teachers from stop to stop along a nature trail. I remember most vividly his description of seeing a

⁷³ (Preston, 2004).

⁷⁴ (Drasdo, 1973).

⁷⁵ (Priest, 1999a).

⁷⁶ (Priest, 1989, 1999a).

⁷⁷ (Drasdo, 1973).

⁷⁸ (Drasdo, 1973).

party climbing a mountain for fieldwork purposes, but enjoying the climb far more than some groups he had seen burdened down with survival gear in an adventure scheme planned to the last details.⁷⁹ This must be another faultline in outdoor education. The environmental faultline. That divisive area where the environment is either viewed as a monolithic area for people to adventure across, or the view that the environment is part of human agency. Relating to the natural aspects of one's immediate environment."

"The latter point in the faultline is something I'm interested in," said Lou. "I would describe what you were saying, James, as learning that occurs through interpreting the local environment. That's what I'm interested in, engaging students in learning how to read the landscape and developing their knowledge of a place through multiple lenses. I have a story I would like to tell. Are you folks still interested?" asked Lou.

"Yeah!" said Mike. Simon and I nodded. "We've got nothing else to do. This is more interesting than having to listen to another presentation about the benefits of outdoor education," Mike exclaimed.

"Great," said Lou. "I must admit Simon I enjoyed the metaphor your use of the name Outdoor Ed created. Could I use that name?" asked Lou.

"It would be an honour," said Simon, making a bowing gesture.

"Great, okay . . . I would like to share a story about an outdoor educator I used to know. I feel this story is important because it is representative of several frontline outdoor educators, just beginning their careers in this field. For James' benefit I think I

⁷⁹ (Drasdo, 1973).

should set this story in Ontario, even though it could happen in a number of different countries. I feel that's enough background right now, I guess I'll start telling my story."

Chapter Seven: The Shock of the Quiet

It was his first day back. Outdoor Ed had been on a 3 day break from the residential outdoor education centre. His car broke down on Sunday (metaphorically so to speak), stranding him across the province at his parent's house. So, early Sunday morning he called his supervisor and told her that he couldn't come into work until Monday night. Shocked for a moment, she accepted his excuse. Ed took an extra day off.

Some may ask why Outdoor Ed was so deceitful, so unprofessional to make such a call. However, at the time, Ed had been haunted over his time off about an incident that occurred at the centre just before he left. What upset him was the dissonance created between two contrasting moments. The first, remembering the comments from his last client, a corporate personal growth facilitator. Second, a discussion he had with the centre's other senior staff.

The first moment with his client had been a strange, but very uplifting experience. The client had purchased initiatives, low ropes, and several high ropes activity programs. Throughout the week, during the day a colleague and Outdoor Ed facilitated these adventure activities. In the early mornings and at nights, the personal growth facilitator ran his reflective sessions. The program had been described as a success by its participants. So, at the end of the program, the corporate personal growth facilitator invited Ed's program partner and him to the final reflective group session scheduled after lunch but before the participants left the centre. The facilitator indicated that he felt it was important for the program staff at outdoor centers to hear feedback from clients

because staff, such as Ed, often did not hear any feedback from the participants about their efforts. Ed and his colleague agreed to attend.

At the final group session the participants passed a talking feather clockwise around the room. When a client had the feather, they alone were allowed to speak, truthfully and honestly.⁸⁰ This day they gave thanks to Outdoor Ed's partner and himself. Ed was given thanks for his calm voice and his partner for her ability to connect with people. Ed felt expressionless. He nodded when a client commented on his behavior. The participants called Outdoor Ed a role model, a person who stimulates thinking, a teacher of trust, a charismatic caring human being. Ed didn't know how to react to that. So, Ed didn't react. When the feather was passed to him, all he said was, "Thank you. It was a pleasure."

At the end, the corporate facilitator looked at Outdoor Ed and said, "I told you what I wanted, no matter what you thought about it you still implemented it. You're a true pro." Ed was silent, shocked, and left feeling a little weird. In that moment he realized something, he did his job and for that he was called a professional. He thought: if that is what I need to do to be called a pro, that's something I want to strive for as an outdoor educator. Ed realized to learn this all he had to do was listen, reflect, and act.

But after listening and reflecting on the second moment he still decided to take an extra day off. All Ed could think was: I really needed a break from the outdoor centre staff. Ed remembered the controversy well in the office that day when the senior staff (including himself) were discussing whether Ed could eat the meals served for the camp staff during the upcoming summer season. In the end, the general manager told the staff

⁸⁰ (Henley & Peavy, 2006).

he thought it was ridiculous that Ed should not be permitted to eat with the rest of camp. So, the general manager told Ed he could eat. Ed wondered why he had to go through the whole debate in the first place. He had been allowed to eat with the camp in the past and it had been no problem. But, eating his next meal before he headed on his time off he realized something was afoot as he got weird eye glances from some of the senior camp staff who didn't like him and had brought up the issue. Ed thought: they just don't want to eat with me. As he served himself, he told himself, "If my boss says I can, then I'm not going to let them bother me." Reflecting on this ordeal, after being called a professional earlier that day, Ed decided he would take an extra day off to get away from the in-staff gossip.

Tuesday Morning

On Tuesday morning, Outdoor Ed woke up at 7:00 am and went to eat breakfast. In the dinning hall the housekeeping staff approached him. Ed poured a cup of coffee.

"Come help fold sheets," said a member of the housekeeping staff.

"No, I'm eating my breakfast right now," said Ed. The housekeeping staff stormed out of the dining hall. The door slammed shut and opened again. The head of housekeeping came in and asked, "When are you supposed to work?"

"I start work at 8:00 am," replied Outdoor Ed.

"Then why can't you help fold sheets? We have lots of work to do, you could help."

"No. I'm eating my breakfast right now," said Outdoor Ed.

“Well, then at 8:00 you come and fold sheets, okay?” said the head of housekeeping.

“No, at 8:00 I have lots to do, ” Outdoor Ed claimed.

“What do you have to do? You’re not that busy?” said the head of housekeeping. Ed began to wonder: if she is so busy, why is she taking all this time to try and convince him to do her job.

“Set up the climbing wall and ropes course. Organize the orienteering equipment.”

“What, and then you go and play guitar?” interrupted the head of housekeeping.

“No, then I set up the rest of the program and run it for the scheduled group.”

The head of housekeeping grunted, waved her arms in the air and walked away. Ed reminded himself: *not everyone who worked at this centre knows what I do, especially when sitting around planning a program or climbing on high ropes courses, running archery programs, or romping through the woods. Often it looks like I’m playing.* Ed thought: *well yes, to an extent I am playing . . . but that’s how I am as a teacher. At the same time I’m running a program for a scheduled group.* Ed felt upset that the head of housekeeping thought all he did was play guitar. Ed imagined her trying to lead a group of grade 10 students. He didn’t think she would want to. So, it made him wonder why she would say such a comment. Outdoor Ed reminded himself that it’s important to say no, most people don’t say it enough. This is because Ed needed to keep a clear distinction between his life on site and his work on site. As a resident, because Ed was always around, he felt other departments and clients thought he should be working if he was

awake. This was becoming frustrating for him because he felt that he couldn't sit and have coffee in the dining hall without being asked to help with something.

At 8:00 am, Ed dropped by the office to meet with his supervisor. She wasn't at her desk so Ed left a note on her keyboard: *if you need me I'm on the radio*. With three of his peers, Ed left to set up the scheduled ropes course and climbing wall. On the way to the ropes course Ed rolled his eyes, one of his peers, Jane, was talking again about how important it was everyone works as a team, especially since she had missed her breakfast.

"Okay, guys, let's get this done as quickly as possible. I forgot to grab some breakfast and I'd like to get some before the group shows up today. So if we all work as a team, we can all go back to the dining hall early, grab a snack and a cup of coffee. That shouldn't be too hard, that's what we teach anyways, eh?"

When they got to the ropes course, they opened the equipment shed and grabbed the equipment for the climbing wall and ropes course. The other two staff members said they'd set up the climbing wall. Off they went. That left Jane and Outdoor Ed to set up the ropes course. Ed grabbed two ropes and a ladder, then headed off to the ropes course. Turning around, Ed saw Jane walk the other way. She went off to talk to the other two staff setting up the climbing wall. After 20 minutes, she decided to come over to the ropes course. There was still a lot to set up. Time was running out before the group arrived.

Jane asked, "Do you need help?"

"Does it look like I need help?" Ed replied.

"What do you mean?" She asked.

"Does it look like I need help?" Ed repeated.

She sounded defensive. "I'm only asking because-"

"Yes, and I asked you if it looked like I needed help?"

"Yes," she replied.

"Great!" Ed said. "Let's get to work." For a moment Ed felt guilty because he had teased that response from her. It would have been easier to simply say yes, but then again standing around chatting for 20 minutes was not his definition of working as a team, instead, it was his definition of a hypocrite not helping out. Still, as he set up the ropes course, he felt unsure if the questions he had asked had been appropriate. Yet, at the same time he also knew that Jane often walked around preaching teamwork as if she was quoting passages directly from Miles and Priest's (1999) text: *Adventure Programming*. She often told people that she was good at her job because she was working on a Bachelor of Arts in outdoor recreation. Because of her expertise everything had to be questioned, including when it was time to set up. Outdoor Ed was a qualified teacher, but he never walked around telling other staff that. He was all for consensus, but as a team member Ed felt that she, like other staff, should be able to recognize when there is equipment still on the ground, that a program was scheduled to start soon and set-up still needed to be finished.

What happened to common sense? Ed thought to himself. That's what used to happen in the early days when he had started working at this outdoor centre, but in those days the staff were much older than Jane, in their late 20s and early 30s. At that time, he was the baby on staff, his colleagues had several years' experience working in the field. But they had moved on in their careers. Now, most of the staff hired were in their late

teens to early 20s. They had little experience (if any), unlike Outdoor Ed's previous colleagues.

Stalled

Upon returning to the office, Ed and the others sat around waiting for the group's bus to arrive. But by 10:00 am the bus had still not arrived.

"Okay Ed, can you find something to do? I'm going to call the school to find out why the group is late," said Ed's supervisor. Ed decided to clean up the program office where the equipment for programs was stored. Several staff (specifically the senior camp staff) had complained about the state of the program office and how they wanted it cleaned, but argued that it would take too much time that they needed for planning camp. Then, they would follow this complaint up by complaining that they did not have enough time to plan. All Outdoor Ed could think when he watched them do this was: *why are they complaining when they could either be planning or cleaning the program office? Why are so many people so busy, that the only thing they have time for is to complain?* For Ed, he concluded: *I guess it's easy to talk about ideas, but eventually something needs to happen.* So, Outdoor Ed decided he would demonstrate this idea and clean the program office. He began to clean and his supervisor stopped by.

"Jane wanted to do that," said Ed's supervisor,

"Great! Then it won't get done," Ed replied. She agreed, nodded her head, and Ed returned to cleaning. In their rush to plan for camp, the senior summer camp staff had made a mess, spreading equipment and garbage all over the office. The full-time outdoor education staff (including Ed) had had their personal belongings thrown off the book

shelf in their rush to move camp supplies to the new headquarters for the residential summer camp. Outdoor Ed was livid, because their camp supervisor had promised him that she would tell her staff to clean it up. However, after returning from his time off, Ed was told by the camp supervisor that her staff *didn't have time*. They needed to plan. For him, this sounded like another excuse.

Outdoor Ed began to sift through the garbage looking for important things, like letters, program equipment, and buckets that could be salvaged from the mess. What he found was a pile of scrap papers with notes jotted on them, “to be done before camp,” marshmallow packages that had been opened and left to melt over the orienteering equipment, in-house painted signs left damaged in their own haste, molding fruit acquiring fruit flies and buckets of grease stinking up the room collected from the kitchen to be used for musical drums. One bucket still had grease inside and had fallen over making a nasty orange stain on the floor. Ed got frustrated when he couldn't get the stain off the linoleum floor. But he continued to clean. After an hour, Outdoor Ed took a break. He found himself complaining to anyone he could talk to about the state of the program office.

“You look upset, are you okay?”

“No, I'm frustrated. The program office has not been cleaned.” It was helpful to know people were taking the time to check in on him because Ed felt really frustrated. But, as he told a close friend and colleague his frustrations, she dug into the garbage and found some program supplies that could still be used. Program supplies Ed had thrown out. She told him to watch what he was throwing out. A few minutes later the outdoor education supervisor came down to sift through the garbage. Ed realized in his efficiency

to clean up, that he had not considered what he was throwing out. He was tired and upset. Outdoor Ed just wanted to see the room clean, even if that meant a few program supplies were sacrificed in the process.

“Are you babysitting me?” Ed asked his supervisor.

“No! I'm making sure you don't throw anything else out that's important for program.”

However, the program supplies Ed had thrown out he knew had not been used in his several years working at the centre. During the last staff turn-over, a change in discourse had occurred. The new supervisors and most of the frontline staff had decided that it was impossible to keep the program office clean. So, people just didn't clean up their messes or purge the office of program supplies that were never used. This just made the problem more complex.

Trying to keep busy himself, his colleague, Jon, came down to help. Shortly after starting, frustrated himself, Jon threw up his arms up and left. Ed didn't bother asking why. They were just filling time. After Ed finished cleaning, he found Jon.

“Hey, do you want to take down the ropes course and climbing wall?” Ed asked.

“We won't be using it.” Jon nodded. Before they left, Ed decided to grab his digital camera. He had been planning on making a visual poster about how to make plaster casts of real animal tracks as a way to encourage staff to use the outdoor environment as a place to teach about the centre's natural ecosystem. He thought this would be a good task to do today. Before he left the building, he decided to stop by his supervisor's desk to check on the status of the group that hadn't arrived yet. But she wasn't there, so Ed left a note on her keyboard again: *If you need me I'm on radio.*

When Jon and Ed had finished taking down the ropes course, they smiled and sat down on a picnic table for a few moments.

“I’m going for a short walk to make my track casting poster. Would you like to join me?” asked Ed.

“Sorry, I’ve got my own things to do,” replied Jon.

So, Jon waved his hand and said he’d meet Outdoor Ed at the dinner table. Then he went on his way. Outdoor Ed began to walk down the trail towards the creek where he knew he would find animal tracks in the soft mud on the creek’s banks. A call came over the radio.

“E-” it wasn’t his name so he ignored it.

“E-” it wasn’t his name so he ignored it.

“Hey,” shouted one of the maintenance staff from across a field.

“Yes?” said Ed.

“Your supervisor is trying to get you on the radio,” said the maintenance staff.

“Okay.” Ed pressed down the button and said, “Hey, it’s me.”

“Hey, Ed. I just wanted to know what you’re up to?” his supervisor asked.

“I’m looking for some tracks to cast so I can make a ‘how to’ poster about casting real animal tracks.”

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“So, you’re down in the ELP room?” asked his supervisor. Outdoor Ed rolled his eyes. *She didn’t get it*, he thought. It was clear to Ed that his supervisor thought he was in the ELP (Environmental Learning Program) room at the indoor sandbox, making plaster castings using the artificial track stamps she had bought. Ed giggled, imagining his outdoor education supervisor adding a Sasquatch stamp to the sandbox. After all, she

had bought a bobcat, black bear, and moose track stamp, all animals that didn't live on the land owned by the centre or in the surrounding ecosystem.

"No, I'm at the creek." Outdoor Ed replied.

"What . . . ? Oh well, when you're done there could you come and talk to me?"

"O-ka-y," said Ed.

But Ed never got a chance to talk to his supervisor. Thirty minutes later, she had decided to leave early. So, Ed continued his work. At the end of the day he decided to have a beer with his cabin mates, the male kitchen staff. It was 9:00pm when the door to their cabin swung open and some of the senior camp staff came in. Outdoor Ed and the kitchen staff were playing a game of cards.

"Could you please knock before opening the door," asked a member of the kitchen staff. The camp staff stormed in and sat down at the table.

"Can we play?" asked one of the camp staff.

"Okay," said Ed and the kitchen staff.

"Hey . . . you're all drinking beer. The camp supervisor won't like that," said another one of the camp staff. "You're breaking the camp alcohol ban. You shouldn't be drinking."

"But this is our private cabin, we're not near camp, and we're not camp staff. So why are you bothering us about this? The general manager has told us we can have a beer at the end of the day as long as it is in this cabin," Ed explained. But they disagreed, and argued with Ed saying he didn't know what he was talking about. A moment later the camp staff threw down their cards and stormed out of the cabin.

"Good riddance," Ed said. The kitchen staff nodded.

The next morning after eating breakfast the general manager told Ed that it was still okay for him and the kitchen staff to have a beer in his cabin. Apparently, the camp supervisor had been called last night and a discussion had occurred between her and some of the senior camp staff about who could and who couldn't have alcohol on site. He indicated that the camp staff were asked to sign a form indicating they agreed to a personal alcohol ban because they would be the immediate caregivers for the campers. This agreement had just started as pre-camp had begun, even though these staff were still occasionally helping out the outdoor education department. The general manager indicated to Ed that the all members of the camp staff had been told to mind their business. All Ed could think was, *I hope they will.*

The Kids Have Arrived

After his conversation with the general manager, he stepped outside. The weather report that morning indicated it was a hot day. The humidex was supposed to be 42 degrees. Outdoor Ed could see the heat rising from the field. Just carrying the orienteering equipment outside his body immediately began to sweat. With his shirt drenched, he grabbed his radio and called one of his peers he was working with today.

"Chandra?" asked Outdoor Ed.

"Yeah, what do you need?" she replied.

"What are you doing?" Ed asked.

"Eating," said Chandra.

"Okay, when you're done could you radio me if the kids have arrived?"

"Yeah," she replied.

“Oh, remember to make sure they have water bottles. I don't want any kids to be outside without water bottles.” Chandra assured him that she would make sure all the kids would have water bottles, even if the centre had to supply them. When Outdoor Ed returned to the office, the kids arrived. Hustling them off the bus Ed asked them to gather in a large circle on the open field in front of the main building. The teacher in charge approached Ed.

“Where is the office?” she asked.

“Right through that door, Miss,” said Outdoor Ed pointing a finger towards the two large doors of the main building. “Just head to the front counter and our secretary will help you.” So the teacher did. Outdoor Ed went over to the circle where a group of grade 8 students were gathering on the field. The group was loud and Ed refused to talk over their voices. So he waited, reflecting on an experience he had during his time in the industry when one of his early mentors had told him, “silence makes students nervous. They're used to teacher's trying to talk over them. Silence quiets them quickly and gets their attention.” So, Ed continued to wait. After a few moments, it worked. The students began to quiet themselves down. When everyone was ready, Ed explained the centre's philosophy.

“We call it the three R's: (a) respect yourself, (b) ¹respect others, and (c) respect the environment,” said Outdoor Ed. The students seemed to understand, so he broke them into smaller groups for the day.

For his first program, Outdoor Ed ran orienteering. He distributed the maps and asked the students to identify the features on the map. The students identified the contour lines, legend, what the legend told them, identified the trails, landmarks, and symbols.

One student pointed out the immediate landmarks in the actual environment around her. Next, Ed explained to the students that they were supposed to look for wooden orienteering markers around the site. While they did this, they were going to participate in a race, using their maps to find the wooden markers. They were also challenged to figure out a secret code from the letters spelt on each marker. Ed explained that the markers could be placed on a tree, a bench, or even a pole in the meadow. When he was done explaining the activity, he asked the students where the closest marker was and told them, "We should find it together."

The students started to look for the first marker. Quickly Ed discovered that the students needed to be taught how to physically orient the map to the direction they wanted to go. He recognized that they might be at a zone of proximal development⁸¹. So, he physically turned the map in one of the student's hands so that it matched the trail they were standing on. When the students figured out the right direction, Ed emphasized that the fun of orienteering was that it is a race. He broke into a run, dashing out to the area where the students thought the location of block nine should be. As he ran, the students bolted past him and found the marker.

"Here it is!" they yelled.

Gathering the group together one more time, Ed asked the students to get into pairs.

"You're in grade 8, almost grade 9 and I know you guys have what it takes to make things safe. It's called common sense. You know what's safe and the boundaries you are supposed to respect." The students nodded their heads. "You have 45 minutes to

⁸¹ (Vygotsky, 1978).

find as many markers as you can. Hopefully, one group will discover the secret message. Go!”

Turning around, Outdoor Ed realized that the teacher who had accompanied him had become worried.

“Where are they going?” said the teacher. “You can’t let them run off like that.”

“They should be okay, but we’ll follow the students you think need supervision.”

So, Outdoor Ed and the teacher did. The teacher was surprised that the troublesome boys from her class were engaged in the orienteering activity, instead of causing trouble. They were excited to participate in a race.

“I guess those students are okay,” said the teacher.

“Use your-” said Ed.

“Common sense!” finished the students.

“Okay, you can go,” said the teacher. Off ran the boys. At this moment the teacher told Ed, “Oh Ed . . . I forgot to hand in the assumption of risk forms. Do you know where I can hand them in?” asked the teacher.

“At the office in front of the field where we met this morning,” Ed replied. The teacher nodded her head. After 40 minutes the first group returned.

“We saw a deer, but we couldn’t find any markers,” said the students. So, Outdoor Ed reviewed reading contour lines and orienting on the map to the landscape. Then, he let them loose for another 10 minutes.

At that moment Ed reflected on the knowledge and skills students learn at school. He began to question if the students he was working with had an understanding of how to use a map to negotiate the real world. The simplicity of being able to pick up a map and

read it, use its directions was something Outdoor Ed often did when driving on the highway, choosing a trail to walk, or even explore a local park. For him, it was becoming evident that the map reading skills these students had been taught in school were not being connected to the world where they would apply it. Outdoor Ed sighed because he knew this demonstrated a culture that disseminated knowledge as a set of facts, instead of also as a set of skills. Outdoor Ed shook his head.

“Why is this happening more often?” Ed mumbled to himself.

Once everyone was back from orienteering, Outdoor Ed took his students to the archery range. Archery was a short period. He introduced the activity, went over the parts of the arrows, and then allowed them to shoot. 3 students shot at a time, while the other 10 students sat and waited.

“Is your cock feather right?” Ed would ask. But the students were more intent on achieving a high score than learning how to shoot correctly. Ed tried to emphasize shooting for fun and to develop a skill. But most students only wanted to get a high score. Ed decided to ignore the issue and assist the students. He began to coach them.

“Raise your elbow up, stand shoulder width apart, flick your fingers back.” He encouraged them to adjust their shooting stance. “Shoot up a little higher, aim at the bull’s eye, move to the left of the target a bit more . . . oh no, well try moving more to the right.” Ed’s students listened.

The Dining Hall Conversation

At lunch in the dining hall Ed got the class up to the buffet. There was still another class in the dining hall that hadn't eaten. So, Outdoor Ed decided to invite up this class as well.

"Hey Ed, this isn't your job," said Chandra. "You should be able to eat. This is Jane's group. She should have invited these people up for lunch before we even arrived." So Chandra went to the office to look for Jane. She came back and said that Jane felt she was *too busy* to help. After resolving the dining hall situation, Ed stuck his head out the dining hall door. He saw Jane typing away on a *computer with* the screen on the internet site: Facebook.

She must be really busy, Ed thought, too busy to even do 20 minutes of work. That was fine with him. He told the office why he only had a 15 minute lunch and the general manager said he'd schedule him to leave early on Friday. Sitting down at the lunch table, Jane came in, grabbed some food and sat down at the table with Chandra and Ed. They had a short chat. First, Jane told them she was frustrated having to take down and put up the ropes course twice that morning. She said that the centre needed a system, a chart to tell her what ropes courses were being used during the day and when. But Jane wanted to hold off on making it.

"We should ask the outdoor education supervisor first. She could get defensive."

"You know what I do? Every morning I look at all the schedules for the day in the program book and then talk to other program staff with schedules that conflict with mine," Ed explained.

“That's too hard,” Jane said. Then, she rambled on about what type of system they needed. A white board, a chart, and how the outdoor education supervisor should do it. Reflecting in the moment, Outdoor Ed felt this staff member was just starved for attention and needed people to talk to. His thoughts were confirmed when Jane asked him where the track pulley was for the ropes course. According to her, Ed was supposed to know because Ed held a certification in ropes course instruction.

“Hey Ed, where's the track pulley? I need one at my ropes course program this afternoon. You need to get it to me as soon as you're done.” Outdoor Ed found her demands ridiculous. First, he was working with his own group that afternoon. Second, he questioned whether she really knew what she was asking for? Not even bothering to indicate to her that he was running his own program, he asked her a simple question.

“Why do you need them?”

“Because they're on the list,” said Jane. Ed thought: *if I didn't know much about ropes courses I would follow the list too, but did she really need these articles? It felt like she didn't. She wouldn't be using them. She didn't know what they were for. So why would a list tell her what to get if she didn't know what she was looking for in the first place?* Ed explained that he was running his own program in the afternoon and was unable to help her. Jane told Ed he was a jerk and stormed out of the dining hall.

After lunch Outdoor Ed informed his supervisor that the teacher had not handed in the assumption of risk forms. She confirmed that the centre needed those forms. When all the members of the school group had gathered by the campfire pit, Ed quietly told the teacher and then took the group on a nature hike to the local creek to make plaster casts of animal tracks and conduct a stream study. The centre called the program ‘Kick and

Sweep'. Outdoor Ed brought four cameras along to take nature photographs on the hike with the intention of printing them at the digital photography computer lab during the final activity period before dinner. He was designing a new curriculum related program for the grades 4, 6, 9, and 10 Ontario science curriculums. He called it the 'Tracks and Scat' identification program. He wanted to test out plaster casting this day to see how well these students took to the activity. In the future, it was his hope that students would learn to identify animal tracks and scat to assist the centre in compiling a database of locations where our wildlife could be viewed on the centre's property. This way students could develop a greater understanding of the habitats of resident animals and the property's biodiversity. Down at the creek Ed and the students made castings of deer, beaver, and raccoon tracks. A student looked at Ed and said he couldn't find any tracks, but he was surrounded by 40 raccoon tracks. Ed laughed. *How blind can you be?* Ed knew the student was excited about the activity. He just didn't know what to look for.

Next, Outdoor Ed found a shallow part of the creek and the kids went wild in their rubber boots finding arthropods and aquatic insects that they identified using the charts prepared for the program. This allowed them to explore and feel the physical environment. Students identified several macro-invertebrates and decided that the creek was slightly polluted as they made connections between ¹species and the level of pollution in the creek using the identification cards provided for the program.

Possible Spinal Injury?

After exploring the creek, Ed took his students and the cameras to the digital photography computer lab so that he could help print out the photographs that the students had taken during our nature hike and stream study. Unfortunately, his digital photography program was interrupted by another call on the radio from one of Ed's peers, Cole.

"Col- to the office. Cole t-." Cole's radio cut out. No one answered. The straight forward tone of Cole's voice made Ed think he needed help. He sensed that it might be a major situation.

"Cole, I'm in the digital lab. Do you need help?" Ed asked. Cole didn't answer. Ed called again.

"Cloe-" Again Cole's radio cut out. In a flash, Outdoor Ed was upstairs, asking the centre's administrator if he had heard Cole on the radio.

"Yes."

"Do you think he needs help?" Ed asked.

"He's probably calling for the group's dinner time." Ed argued that it sounded like he needed help. The administrator agreed to humor him. Outdoor Ed jumped back on the radio.

"Cole, your radio is cutting out. Answer my questions with one word answers. Are you fine or in trouble?"

"Trouble," He replied.

"Okay, what is your location?" asked Outdoor Ed.

"Adventure-" his radio cut out again.

"Field or course?" said Outdoor Ed.

"Course," he replied. Ed looked at the administrator.

"I'm on my way, buddy," Said Ed. The administrator agreed to finish running Ed's photography program. Next thing Ed realized was that he was running down the main trail to the pool. Shit! Ed thought as he realized how long it would take for other program staff to show up to help. Then he caught glimpse of Sandy as he ran out to the front of the pool. As part of the maintenance staff, she had her own vehicle. Ed looked at her and said, "Sandy, it's important. We need to go down to the ropes course right now." She looked at Ed for a moment. Then nodded to indicate she understood. Off they went to the ropes course.

Coming around the bend Ed and Sandy spotted Cole, a pile of bikes and the group of boys he had been mountain biking with. Ed looked at Sandy, she looked at Ed. They looked back at Cole. He was holding a member of his group in a spinal grip, his knees supporting the victim's back. There was a lot of commotion from the boys in Cole's group crowding Cole and asking him questions. Outdoor Ed asked the bystanders to help move the bikes to a picnic table across the field. He showed them where and then asked for one leader to stay behind and the rest to head up to the main office to inform the secretary of the situation. Cole was asking the victim questions. Outdoor Ed was receiving no answer in his calls to the radio in the office. Ed asked Sandy to make sure an ambulance was called, gave her his radio, and returned to helping Cole.

"I'm going to check your pulse," Ed told the victim. The victim nodded. Ed cringed. As a lifeguard, possible spinal's were just that, until someone like a doctor said otherwise. His movements made Ed worry. He couldn't find a strong pulse, but thought

he could feel it. The radio started blaring with messages between the camp staff. They were telling jokes. It felt like no one besides Cole, Sandy, and whoever was in the office had knowledge of what was going on. Outdoor education programs were still running elsewhere. Then, Chandra popped out of nowhere with a sleeping bag to put over the victim. She always seemed to be around when Ed needed her. Outdoor Ed continued to check his pulse and pupils four more times before the ambulance arrived and took over. Ed was asked to help, but soon found out he was really being treated as an observer. By that time the outdoor education supervisor and the group's organizer had showed up to make sure everything was okay. The victim was put on a spinal board and put in the back of the ambulance. The radio rang again.

"I'm leaving the ropes course. Ed, do you have an ice pack?"

"Jane, is this an emergency?" asked Ed.

"Jane, just go and get ice from the kitchen," said the outdoor education supervisor.

"Could you tell us what hospital you are taking him to?" Ed's supervisor asked.

"Don't worry, I'll tell you where we are taking him," said the paramedic.

"Thanks," replied Ed's supervisor. After the ambulance left, the outdoor education staff put the bikes away. Then, Outdoor Ed went over to the office. The rest of the rescue team had already started to debrief the incident with the general manager. Ed began to fill out an accident report. During this time, Ed was reminded that he was needed to lifeguard down at the pool for another outdoor education group. Ed asked for some extra time to gather his head, but they were adamant that they needed him to guard. They promised to provide time afterwards. In a state of semi-shock and not thinking

clearly, Outdoor Ed wandered down the hill to the pool to lifeguard for another outdoor education group.

Lifeguarding in Shock

The kids came on deck and Ed conducted swim tests. After the swim tests Outdoor Ed went over the rules of the pool.

“(A) Listen to the guards, if we tell you something it’s for your own safety. (B) Have fun and don’t bother the lifeguards. That is not fun. (C) No drowning in the pool.” Outdoor Ed explained what he meant by no drowning in the pool. “That means if you are a red swimmer you wear a lifejacket in the shallow end, if you’re a yellow swimmer you swim in the shallow end, if you are a green swimmer you can swim in the deep end. Use some common sense. You all know what’s safe for you. Now let’s go swimming!”

Near the end of the swim, Outdoor Ed received a radio message from his supervisor.

“Can you guard a conference centre group?”

“I was really hoping for some time off,” Outdoor Ed replied.

“Well, they’re already on their way down. I need you to guard. It’s really two groups, but they’ll swim together. It’s the small, black¹youth group and the large Asian church group. I’ll make sure you have some time off after this.” Then, the radio went silent. Immediately the conference centre groups began coming out of the woods and heading to the pool. Seventy Asian church members and a small group of black teenagers caught the children’s attention. Ed worried the other group would be trampled while changing, got the other lifeguard to stand on alert, and went out and spoke to the

pack. The people from the black youth group thought Ed was getting defensive when he spoke to them. Outdoor Ed told them, "I speak in a loud forward voice." Then, Ed asked the Asian Church group and the black youth group to wait outside the pool. Ed called up to the office and told his supervisor what was happening. His supervisor told him to talk to the groups. But Outdoor Ed was hoping she would come down and support the situation. It was getting out of hand as the church group started complaining. She didn't.

Once in the pool the people from the Asian church group kept pushing people in the pool, discreetly. Outdoor Ed told them not to. His fellow lifeguard and he gave them one more warning. Then, Ed pointed at the next group member who pushed a person in.

"Hey, I told you not to push people in the pool. The next time you do that you can leave." No one else pushed anybody into the pool. The group started policing themselves, even covering simple pool rules, such as no running on the deck, that Outdoor Ed had forgotten to review with the group. Ed thought to himself, *for some weird reason Asian people think they can pretend that they don't understand me and speak in their Asian language.* "I no speak English," they would tell Ed. Then, they would start speaking in English to their friends after he turned his back. Outdoor Ed hated this type of treatment and the first person who did this Ed told to leave. They said sorry.

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Almost at the same time, the Asian's group's leader came to Ed and said that they had the pool for an additional hour. Ed told him he would call up to his supervisor to confirm this.

"Yeah?" she said over the radio.

“The group says they have swimming for an additional hour. What’s up?” There was radio silence for 5 minutes. Ed hated when people don’t communicate with him. Outdoor Ed pressed down the button after waiting 7 minutes.

“Hello, are you there?”

“You have to wait-” The supervisor said. Outdoor Ed was tired of her lack of communication. After swimming was done, Outdoor Ed called his father and told him he was not planning on continuing his work at the outdoor centre after he was finished his current contract. The environment was toxic, people didn’t seem to understand other people’s roles, and many people were talking behind other’s backs. Outdoor Ed was tired of the negative environment. This was evident to him from the radio conversation he had with his supervisor. *How simple*, Ed thought, *would it be to say I need a few more minutes?* But, instead, Ed just got what he always got from her, radio silence and her absence. Outdoor Ed had gotten upset over the lack of support. He felt this centered on communication and respect for people as people. Later that night before Ed’s supervisor left she asked him to sign Cole’s accident report as a witness. She said she didn’t need his report. This might confuse head office, making them think there were two accidents. Outdoor Ed thought this was a silly statement, but kept his thoughts to himself. He had already made his decision.

Accountability Anyone?

The next morning in the dining hall the teacher approached Outdoor Ed at breakfast. They were leaving after breakfast but she wanted to let him know a few things before she left. First, the teacher complained that the centre's secretary had hassled her about collecting the money. She said she already paid.

"The secretary should have approached me on the first day off the bus, not you, Ed. That way this issue could have been dealt with. Oh, by the way, the secretary has still not asked for the assumption of risk forms so I have not given them to her. I can't anymore. The forms are in my car. It's heading back to school," said the teacher.

She then criticized the centre, comparing it to other organizations such as the Frost Center, Kinark Center, and Kandalore Center. All Outdoor Ed could think about while she was talking was, why is she comparing this centre to other centres? If she wanted to visit those centres then why had she decided to come to this centre? Other teachers from her school were not complaining; instead they freely discussed how happy they were with the program. It almost felt as if she wanted to look more sophisticated. Outdoor Ed reminded himself that some teachers who visit an outdoor centre sometimes just don't understand their responsibilities. So, Ed nodded his head and told the teacher he would speak to the secretary and then left the dining hall. Once in the office Outdoor Ed rolled his eyes, sat down in a chair, and told the general manager, "I just needed a few minutes to cool my head." The general manager nodded.

"I understand. Sometimes I need to take a few minutes to cool my head, too."

While Ed cooled his head, he thought, *what is evident about this teacher is her unease in taking any kind of responsibility for: (a) her role in organizing the trip, and (b)*

bringing her students to the center. Outdoor Ed asked himself, why was she making such a big deal about the assumption of risk forms? Did the teacher ever really have them?

Ed felt like yelling, "Probably not!" He hated it when he had to work with clients like these. He realized he had learned something about her as a teacher. She was just another person unwilling to take accountability for her own actions, instead spilling it on him. Ed thought, *how easy it is for people these days to blame others or say I don't have time instead of taking ownership for their own actions.* Then Ed realized another thing, this was not the kind of outdoor education program or centre he wanted to be involved in. However, he knew that this centre was like many others in Ontario. So, 'Outdoor Ed sat in the office and thought, what I am going to do?

Discussing Lou's Story: Questioning Professionalism

Lou took a deep sigh. "Can I get a pop?" she asked. Mike tossed her a pop. I rustled on my log. Mike stretched his arms.

Simon said, "Wow . . . um . . . well, just to put it out there, I can relate to his feelings. I am an outdoor educator. That is part of me. From a pragmatic perspective, I need to make a living. I need shelter, food, and clothing. I'd love to be paid a decent salary to work at my ideal centre, but there are not many of those places around. So, programs are often designed to fit the client's desires. Seeing as I need to make money, I fall back on the skills I have spent 15 years accruing, and . . . provide adventures in a bun."⁸² That means I have to work at centres that have programs similar to what Outdoor Ed facilitated, with 44 hour work weeks running ropes course programs and teambuilding initiatives.⁸³ Sometimes there are last minute changes. However, I'm shocked at the experience you described in your story."

"I know it concerns me, too. That's why I told the story," Lou said shaking her head. "To tell you the truth, I've heard many stories like this one. Hearing them from my students, there are many people working in outdoor education today who have authoritarian personalities. They just want what they want, don't care about anyone else. Too often I find even with my colleagues where I work, that many of them think they are busier than others. Often they say *I don't have time*, instead of trying to make time." Lou shook her head. "It's just frustrating that so many people think they don't have any

⁸² (Beames, 2006, p. 8).

⁸³ (Beames, 2002).

time . . . but for themselves. What happened to caring about students and co-workers? Or being student-centered?"

"You know, Goodale⁸⁴ warned outdoor educators that this could happen, especially with people interested in technology," I said, shrugging my shoulders. "He said that people attracted to the technological aspects of society are predominantly authoritarian. That they feel they need to control situations. Well, ropes courses are, as Priest⁸⁵ describes artificial environments. They're basically just big technological devices. Look at the instructors in your story, Lou, like the character, Jane. She was a very manipulative person. I was happy to hear Ed stand up to her bullying, but it seemed that she was always trying to control the situation," I explained.

I shook my head, "I feel like I'm in shock. I can't believe he put up with all that bullying. It just seems like so many people wanted him to do things for them without realizing that he had his own responsibilities at the centre. When those bullies couldn't get their own way they lashed out making rude comments about the person or their craft. Remember the head of housekeeping? She basically insinuated that Ed was a freeloader. Remember Jane, when Ed told her he couldn't help her find a piece of ropes course equipment because he had to run his own program, she called him a jerk. That's not professional. You know, Heather Crawford⁸⁶ makes a good point in the British outdoor education publication *Horizons*. She comments that bullying is often ignored in the workplace by co-workers who hope it will just go away. She emphasizes that this phenomenon occurs also in outdoor education programs and that outdoor educators

⁸⁴ (Goodale, 1972).

⁸⁵ (Priest, 1999a).

⁸⁶ (Crawford, 2008).

should not try to ignore it. Crawford argues that when bullying is ignored by supervisors and other staff, that support is often given to the perpetrator. This is supported by Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Osterman, and Kaukiainen⁸⁷ who have published research arguing that bullying is not an individual problem between a bully and his victim, but is a group phenomenon that is either supported by the group through inaction or challenged by the group by standing up to the bully. Crawford⁸⁸ argues that plans to assist subjects of bullying and bullies themselves need to be put in place to ensure effective actions can be taken to deal with bullying. However, as she has experienced herself, when this doesn't occur, which is often, the subject of bullying is often worked out of the organization, branded as a troublemaker because the subject suggested this was occurring." I dropped my head, sitting and thinking what to say next. The story had silenced us for the moment. Then Mike spoke.

Benefits of a Clear Vision

"I've taught what Canadians call an Integrated Curriculum Program (ICP) for 10 years. I know what I do and am responsible for.⁸⁹ My ICP name is CELP (Community Environmental Leadership Program) and is described as a package of regular high school courses taught at an off-campus site. In this setting the course focuses on community, students learn with the teachers. We have a formal classroom in one building and utilize another with a living room and kitchen. The off-site property includes a large forest, trails, a small river, and open fields. For one semester, this is where students earn grade 10 credits in: English, Careers and Civics, Outdoor Education, and

⁸⁷ (Salmivalli et al., 1996).

⁸⁸ (Crawford, 2008).

⁸⁹ (Elrick, 2007).

Interdisciplinary Studies. One teacher is responsible for English. I am responsible for the other courses.⁹⁰ Integration between courses occurs as the curriculum overlaps. For example, after a short wilderness canoe or snowshoeing trip, the English class writes a reflective essay about the trip. It gives students a chance to write from their personal experiences. In the Careers course, students investigate their skills, future careers, and job application techniques. In Outdoor Education, the class participates in communication and problem-solving activities (e.g. group initiative tasks) to learn to work together. Students participate in debates where they research and practice oral presentation skills for Interdisciplinary studies and English. These all contribute to their future career aspirations. The topics debated often concern local community and environmental issues learned through the Civics course. To accomplish these tasks, we conduct research by bicycle, visiting places of issue and interview local citizens. This is what I define as good education.

“Bill Andrews⁹¹ describes this approach as a balanced approach to outdoor education where ecological and environmental studies are combined with outdoor recreation activities to teach students ecological awareness as a member of a natural ecosystem with recreation for physical well-being. But it seems like Outdoor Ed was doing a very different type of outdoor education. He knew what he was supposed to do and the privileges he was allotted. But others didn’t know what he was responsible for or didn’t know what they were responsible for. This is disconcerting, but unfortunately, is what Andrews argues often happens now in many outdoor education programs.

Remember at the start of the story how the head of housekeeping ordered him to help her

⁹⁰ (Elrick, 2007, p. 153).

⁹¹ (Andrews, 2003).

fold sheets? That wasn't his job, that was hers. I'm sure that if he wanted to be employed to fold sheets he would have found a job similar to hers. But to interrogate him about what he's doing, then insinuate that he would sit and play guitar for the day, that's just disrespectful. Then, the camp staff were meddling in his living arrangements, I wouldn't have put up with that. Finally, just as James' said, remember the conversation he had with one of his colleagues at the lunchroom table, how she was demanding about the whereabouts of ropes course equipment because he had a qualification in ropes course programming? She should have been asking her supervisor where the equipment was, not a colleague who was busy working with a different group. She hadn't even completed her job in the dining hall. He had to do it while she checked the internet. No wonder Outdoor Ed decided to leave the centre at the end of his contract. He was having a horrible employment experience. There was obviously no sense of community at that centre. Just people who wanted other people to do their jobs for them. That's not a community. That's just a group of people being self-centered." We all shook our heads. It was clear that Lou was trying to make a point with her story. Mike was dead on with his argument.

"You know what?" Mike continued. "This reminds me of my own experiences as an educator who teaches outside what we call a traditional classroom. One of my most important lessons I learned to this day, arose from what I call community days. When I started my program, called CELP (Community Environmental Leadership Program), I thought getting outdoors and adventuring across the land was most important. That's the 'E' in CELP. I threw the 'C' part in at the last minute on Fridays because I realized that the site needed to be cleaned. I decided to incorporate a weekly group lunch with the cleaning to make the whole process more inviting. But I

started to notice on Fridays that something important was happening. The simple act of sharing a meal nurtured the community of our class. At first I didn't understand, but, finally, I realized that adventuring on the land wasn't enough to foster an environmental ethic. If my students, my co-worker, and I couldn't function as a community, we could never get anywhere with our larger community. It took time for me to realize the social skills we use to relate to each other are the same needed to relate to our planet. My students taught me why the 'C' or community comes first in CELP."⁹²

"So, why was Outdoor Ed's community so dysfunctional?" I asked. Lou raised her hand.

People as Part of the Natural Environment

"It seems to me," Mike replied, "that many of the characters in Lou's story had forgotten how to live as a community. They had forgotten their role as part of the natural landscape. Remember Jane and her internet surfing. If Ed hadn't invited her group up for lunch, then the harmony of her program would have begun to come unhinged. Even though he wasn't happy with her actions, he was willing to act as a member of his outdoor education community and do what he could to ensure all participants at the centre had a good experience."

"It's like he viewed the guests as part of his ecosystem or environment, instead of as an object on an assembly line," Lou interjected. "I argue that Outdoor Ed viewed all the centre's participants as members of his immediate landscape. In reading this landscape, he realized the discomfort Jane's group was imminently facing and performed

⁹² (Elrick, 2007).

his ecological role as a participant in that environment. Mike, from your story it seems that you, too, dictate your actions at times, through reading your immediate landscape.” Mike nodded his head. Lou continued, “This may be why you recognized the importance of your classes’ Friday afternoon meals. You have an ability to read the landscape of your environment.”

“I like how you use the word *environment*,” I commented. Lou looked in my direction. “It’s borrowed from an old French word *environner*, which means to surround.”⁹³ The word *environment* is its plural noun form, which used to mean the surrounding conditions and things affecting animals and plants,⁹⁴ or the neighbourhood.⁹⁵ I argue that human beings need to realize the nature of our immediate landscapes, even in a city. If we don’t start viewing ourselves and our surroundings (urban or rural) as part of our natural world, we may no longer be able to live in our ecological niches. That’s because, as Paul Hawken⁹⁶ argues, if we don’t start acting as if people are part of a natural ecosystem, then we will eventually not have a planet to support urban societies and their economies,” I explained.

“That’s interesting, James and Lou, but it seems like a bit of a stretch when we’re talking about workplace environments.”⁹⁷ Though, I do agree that being able to read his immediate landscape assisted Ed in evading a small programmatic setback for his colleague’s group. Knowing his surroundings ensured the group got up in an efficient

⁹³ (Barnhart, 1988; Chambers, 1965; Skeat, 1965).

⁹⁴ (Barnhart, 1988)

⁹⁵ (Chambers, 1965).

⁹⁶ (Hawken, 1994).

⁹⁷ (E. Sharpe, personal communication, March 6, 2009).

amount of time to eat. Loynes⁹⁸ makes a good point about getting to know your surroundings. He explains using an orienteering metaphor that it's easy to learn to navigate the land using a map, but argues it's a challenge to experience nature by reading the landscape. As you already stated, Goodale⁹⁹ argued that authoritarian personalities are attracted to technological innovations. Often, outdoor educators and field technicians get caught up in teaching participants how to use the tools, instead of actually teaching people how to interpret the landscape. Loynes¹⁰⁰ argues there are more important lessons to be learned from our daily lives if we know how to read the landscape, rather than learning how to navigate through it. Remember how Ed was trying to teach students how to read the map for orienteering and how he was concerned that what the students were learning in the classroom about reading maps was not being transferred into their daily lives? Remember when the students came back and told him they couldn't find any markers but they saw a deer? Ed still tried to teach the students how to read the symbols on the map, ignoring that the students were starting to read the landscape," said Simon.

"Yeah, at that time Ed wasn't any different from those people Goodale was arguing about. He was too focused on teaching students to read the map, instead of engaging the students in a discussion about how they spotted the deer. I guess we need to start asking what's more important: a piece of paper or our interactions in our natural ecosystem," I replied.

"This ability you have, Mike," Lou added, "being able to read the landscape probably assisted you in reading the value of community instilled in your classes' Friday

⁹⁸ (Loynes, 2007).

⁹⁹ (Goodale, 1972).

¹⁰⁰ (Loynes, 2007).

afternoon meals. Unlike Ed, he was still learning how to read the landscape. He hadn't made the full transition. He was still captured in an activity-guide mentality. Knapp¹⁰¹ argues that with the plethora of activity guides available to assist with environmental programming, classroom teachers are more apt today to just choose an activity here out of these resources instead of planning an effective sequential learning experience based on a practitioner's educational philosophy. It seems that many services providing outdoor education programs these days offer their programs in the same way allowing classroom teachers and the general public to just pick and choose a set of activities offered in outdoor education programs instead of providing sequentially effective learning experiences. For you, Mike, reading the landscape allowed you to recognize the sense of community your students were enjoying in that activity and the powerful effect that small event has on your immediate environment, including your students and yourself. But just like Outdoor Ed, other teachers and technicians can become obsessed with teaching people how to use the tools or resources for activities, like orienteering, because that's what the teacher wanted, instead of connecting it to their student's learning back at school. Don't get me wrong, there's nothing wrong with orienteering, it's a good sport and a fun outdoor experience. But it seems that this activity-guide mentality seems to be more connected, as Cuthbertson et al.¹⁰² state, to "an unexamined adoption of technology, instead of a direct and meaningful connection to the natural world," Lou explained.

¹⁰¹ (Knapp, 2000).

¹⁰² (Cuthbertson et al., 2004).

“You know what, Lou,” I interjected. “Crossland¹⁰³ argues that outdoor educators need to start thinking about the types of adventures they are providing. He argues that many outdoor educators, technicians, and administrative staff have allowed their programs to become driven by market forces, rather than their own visions. This has resulted in outdoor education programs that are like junk food experiences, rather than healthy eating. His interesting use of this food simile allows him to illustrate how our unexamined adoption of technology, like high ropes or activities like one off orienteering and archery programs, are more like junk food experiences. This mentality is creating a generation of adventure consumers with no real sense of ownership or control over their outdoor experiences. Just as outdoor educators, like Foster and Linney,¹⁰⁴ argue that many of today’s children are becoming obese because they are not being engaged in activity. I argue, as outdoor educators, we need to start looking at not only getting children involved in activities, but also start thinking about what activities we are providing. Are they fast food adventures like Crossland¹⁰⁵ describes? Quick thrills that entertain participants for a few moments, or are they healthy eating experiences that nurture a relationship with the natural environment?”

Sensuous or Sublime

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“Interesting point, James,” Mike replied. “But I do have to admit, Simon, I don’t think it’s a stretch to view oneself as part of nature. Like Suzuki¹⁰⁶ writes, I recognize my

¹⁰³ (Crossland, 2008).

¹⁰⁴ (Foster & Linney, 2007).

¹⁰⁵ (Crossland, 2008).

¹⁰⁶ (Suzuki, 2003a).

membership in a macro community through my membership in my micro (local) community. But in Lou's story, this recognition wasn't occurring at the archery field or even at the pool. This is something I immerse my students in when I teach. This is the main purpose for my push to provide quality outdoor education experiences connected to the Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum. That's because this provides my students and me with a purpose for what we do. For example, for near the start of the year I take my students for cycling tours through our local community, the city of Guelph. I take them to a local slaughterhouse, to the chambers of our city hall, to the waste management plant, and even grocery stores. My students start discovering how their community works. It creates feelings of freedom for my students and myself by weaving physical exertion and visits with our local citizens. This allows my class to meet our community on a level beyond what is not typically possible in a more traditional school classroom.¹⁰⁷ Like you argue, James, it provides my students with healthy eating experiences, rather than junk food experiences."

"It's like my graduate student supervisor described to me one day: it's the shock of the quiet."¹⁰⁸ It seems many aspects of outdoor education have become caught up in providing quick fairground thrills¹⁰⁹ and another faultline has been created—"I kept talking as Mike whispered to Simon.

"I'm really starting to enjoy his faultline metaphors," said Mike. Simon nodded.

"- between those quieter aspects of outdoor education that provide aesthetic adventures (healthy eating) rather than peak adventures (junk food eating). I've been

¹⁰⁷ (Elrick, 2008, p. 158).

¹⁰⁸ (M. Connolly, personal communication, September 30, 2008).

¹⁰⁹ (Crossland, 2008).

asking myself for some time why outdoor educators need to always strive to create peak adventures for program participants?¹¹⁰ Do we really need to do that?" I argued.

"Hey Simon and Lou," Mike whispered again, "I think James is starting to get somewhere interesting."

"I agree," said Lou. Immersed in my thought processes, I didn't hear what my colleagues were saying. I continued.

"For example, take Priest's¹¹¹ Adventure Experience Paradigm. He argues that outdoor education and outdoor recreation experiences are only truly engaging if the level of risk and competence for participants are balanced to create a flow, a euphoric experience. He argues this only occurs when participants face uncertain experiences during flow. According to Csikszentmihalyi,¹¹² flow experiences occur only when challenge and skills are balanced. If people have more skill than the level of activity they are participating in, then boredom occurs. If the challenge is greater than the person's skill, then anxiety occurs. But I wonder, like Hunt¹¹³ argues, why can't learning be considered an adventure? Why can't flow happen during learning. I think that's what Ed was moving towards. He just hasn't realized it yet," I said. Mike, Lou and Simon nodded their heads. I continued

"Remember how he was trying to produce a poster about how to make plaster casts of real animal tracks outside, but his supervisor thought he was inside using artificial track stamps in a sandbox? He was trying to create something that would

¹¹⁰ (Priest, 1999b).

¹¹¹ (Priest, 1999b).

¹¹² (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

¹¹³ (Hunt, 1999).

encourage his colleagues to venture beyond the sandbox and involve people in a learning experience, an aesthetic adventure. Remember the ‘tracks and scat’ program Ed was trying to develop? He wanted to involve students in reading the signs left by wildlife to create a database so that others could go out and view wildlife at his centre, and students could learn about the habitats of resident animals and the biodiversity of the local ecosystem. Murie¹¹⁴ argues that once people become engaged in these types of activities (e.g., learning how to read the tracks of mammals), this type of challenge arouses a sleuthing instinct in people. By learning how to read tracks, a new world opens up for people. Then, the drama of the natural world becomes evident every time a person passes by a muddy stream bank or walks down a trail in the snow. He argues that this is a naturalist’s spirit, one who goes forth to enjoy what can be found outdoors through exploration of natural ecosystems. Peterson¹¹⁵ and Gibbons¹¹⁶ make a similar argument about the spirit of the naturalist when they describe foraging for wild edibles as their preferred form of recreation. I agree with these points, learning how to identify and *stalk the wild asparagus*¹¹⁷ I’ve developed a deeper understanding of my local ecosystem and my relationship in it. This is connected to my desire to learn what wild edibles I can gather near my suburban home. Ed was trying to create a program that would teach similar skills and enjoyment of reading the landscape. He was developing a program that would evoke the spirit of the naturalist who is interested in what people can learn through the adventure of discovery, rather than through the adventure of risk. Did you know that

¹¹⁴ (Murie, 1954).

¹¹⁵ (Peterson, 1977).

¹¹⁶ (Gibbons, 1962).

¹¹⁷ (Gibbons, 1962).

the word *adventure* originates from the Latin word *adventura*: meaning a thing about to happen?¹¹⁸ Ed's idea had a greater purpose to it than when he was facilitating an equipment centered activity like map reading," I exclaimed.

"Wasn't it orienteering?" asked Simon.

"Well, no. I think it would have been better called map reading because that's what he was concerned with teaching. Sure he was trying to get the students involved in the thrill of orienteering, but he could never get beyond teaching the students how to read a map. I call that map reading," I said. Simon grinned.

"But are you saying we should abandon reading maps?" asked Simon.

"No, no," I replied. "As an outdoor educator, I just feel that I should consider like what we call our outdoor education activities. Ed was trying to teach only one aspect of orienteering: how to read a topographic map. Though, for the program he was developing, he was trying to teach students how to interpret signs of other animals in the local environment so that they could develop a sense of the habitats and biodiversity of the ecosystem immediately surrounding them. Remember the participant who was standing amongst several animal tracks, but said he couldn't find any? Ed was trying to teach that student how to read the environment; to be aware of a larger community and recognize its signs. He was trying to use the land, not just to navigate across it, as Brookes¹¹⁹ argues, often happens in activities like orienteering. He hadn't boxed it like Rivkin¹²⁰ argues adults are experts at doing when organizing children's activities. Rivkin

¹¹⁸ (Harper, 2001).

¹¹⁹ (Brookes, 1994).

¹²⁰ (Rivkin, 2006).

adds it's a way to control children, like Ed's supervisor was trying to control him when she expected him to be in the ELP room working at a sandbox, rather than out in nature making plaster casts of real animal tracks. At this point, Ed's supervisor didn't know how to use the centre's land. My father would argue, after hearing all the stories I've told about my own frustrations working in centre-based outdoor education programs, that its not only that many outdoor educators today don't know much about nature, it's that they don't even know how to use the centre's own land.¹²¹ This is a scary thought when an outdoor education program is based at a centre with large tracts of land. Linking this back to your story, Simon, it seems at that outdoor centre, Ed was providing more high ropes experiences than experiences based on exploring the natural ecosystem of the property. That's the point I think my dad was making," Simon nodded. For a moment I sat quiet. I was in shock. I had surprised myself. Simon spoke.

"Henderson¹²² would argue that outdoor educators need to consider developing warm and green skills, instead of just hard technical skills and soft people skills. He argues that warm skills consider how we meet nature and the ways educators work to create an ambience within the group. He argues this is crucial to developing a human-nature relationship. He argues that green skills are an instructor's ability to ground the experience in context, meaning the stories relevant to a local culture. These skills address the limited attention outdoor educators often have attached to place.

Connecting this back to your story, Lou, most of the activities Ed was delivering focused around equipment intensive activities like ropes course, orienteering, and archery. These

¹²¹ (R. Borland, personal communication, December 8, 2008).

¹²² (Beames, 2006).

kinds of programs are universal and can take place anywhere, or as Baker¹²³ describes, in 'Anywoods, USA'. Even though, I argue that being outdoors with participants demands technical skills suited to the conditions and terrain of the environment, and that wilderness programs require instructors who are very comfortable living in the remote outdoors and can teach these skills. I would argue that there is an overemphasis on outdoor educators amassing skill-based qualifications¹²⁴ and knowledge of the latest technological advances in equipment; this translates into an overemphasis on equipment intensive activities. I agree that parents have a right to expect their child will be paddling down a river or hiking with a competent leader.¹²⁵ But I feel that a competency means more than having a ropes course qualification, like Jane emphasized, when she bothered Ed about ropes course gear. Competency requires being able to listen, think, and then change behaviours in certain situations, like Ed described at the start of his story when he changed his behavior with his participants by using a calm voice. In return, he was called a professional," Simon explained.

"Or like the time he listened to the radio, sensed an emergency, and then acted, ensuring that Cole got help with the possible spinal injury, right?" I asked.

¹²³ (Baker, 2007).

¹²⁴ (Beames, 2006).

¹²⁵ (Beames, 2006).

A Contradiction in Ideology

“Yes,” said Simon. “It’s like Brookes¹²⁶ argues when he’s being critical of neo-colonialist understandings of the land and nature is viewed as an empty site where social or psychological projects can be conducted. *Brookes (2003) believes that outdoor education programs need to incorporate “knowledge of local patterns of community relationships with nature” (p.7). Place-based education is more attuned to local phenomena as it unfolds.*¹²⁷ Like Henderson, Brookes¹²⁸ argues that outdoor educators need to focus on teaching how local communities are integrated, and dependent on the natural surrounding environment. By understanding our environment, we will develop a closer relationship with our local environment, rather than some distant dualistic ideological thing people call nature. This is called place-based education and is attuned to local phenomena as it unfolds. The problem though, and I’m serious about this, is that the people who provide funding for many outdoor education programs still want to know what percentage of participants are better leaders than they were at the beginning of the week.¹²⁹ I feel what many practitioners call outdoor education is lost in what Bowles¹³⁰ argues is a contradiction of ideology. This is the cultural belief that outdoor education espouses a holistic and socioecological nature that educates people about outdoor environments, while submissively it’s really involved in the pursuit of sensationalism and capitalizing on the profiteering of extreme sports.”

¹²⁶ (Brookes, 2003a).

¹²⁷ (Beames, 2006, p. 5).

¹²⁸ (Brookes, 2002).

¹²⁹ (Beames, 2006).

¹³⁰ (Bowles, 2003).

“Fred Loudolph, the Executive Director of Camp Edgewood and Conference Centre, described that same feeling to me. He called it the ‘X’ factor,”¹³¹ I said.

“You know Fred Loudolph?” asked Mike.

“Yeah,” I said. “I had a chance to talk to him when I was interviewed by him recently.”

“Neat! I run my program at his site. Isn’t it interesting how we’re all connected in one large community?” said Mike. “Sorry Simon, please continue.”

“No, no,” said Simon, waving his hand. “I think that was a good interruption. It illustrates my point. As professionals involved in outdoor education, we’re all connected as a large community. But Barnes¹³² argues there is a knowledge gap illuminating what outdoor instructors do and learn. He argues it is undeniable that there is a growing body of research regarding the benefits of outdoor education programs revolving around the ideas of leadership, confidence, self-esteem, and skills such as teamwork. But there has been little research about the culture of outdoor educators. Barnes¹³³ argues this community highlights a group of like-minded people who collectively share strong belief and value systems about individualism and mobility. That many members of this subculture argue they represent a *radical* antithesis to the modern, commerce, and hedonist oriented society. From their perspective, modern society is seen as moving away from traditional values and beliefs of community and, instead, is obsessed with the self. Ironically, members of this subculture value individualism and this doesn’t make sense. As you argued in your research presentation, James, this ideology works to

¹³¹ (F. Loudolph, personal communication, November 7, 2008).

¹³² (Barnes, 2003).

¹³³ (Barnes, 2003).

distance outdoor educators from mainstream society and acts as a fulcrum that permits politicians to view qualified outdoor educators (teachers and expert field technicians) as invisible and, therefore, replaceable with less qualified and cheaper employees. So, this idea that outdoor educators are something different from modern society seems like another fallacy in outdoor education, like Brookes¹³⁴ argument that character building is an ideological illusion. With the proliferation of interest in participating in extreme sports, it may be that many outdoor educators are more hedonistic and obsessed with the self than the society they strive to contrast themselves against. Bowles¹³⁵ argues that as a community, outdoor educators are becoming caught up in a Western-based rational ideology to stay ahead of their competitors. To do this, they have to sell programs, better known as products. Sadly though, their competitors are our fellow outdoor educators. To attract clients (participants) to our programs, many people and organizations in the field have moved to sensational extreme sports. Why?" Simon asked.

"Because it attracts clients and makes money. These are measures that Westerners use to gauge success!" I exclaim.

"Exactly!" said Simon. "To participate in these programs, outdoor educators often need specific qualifications, like Ed who was a qualified ropes course instructor. The problem is that there are a growing number of outdoor education university programs, and as I can see from your story, outdoor recreation university programs, Lou, they're creating a generation of students that perceive themselves as outdoor experts."

¹³⁴ (Brookes, 2004)

¹³⁵ (Bowles, 2003).

“Yep!” Lou confirmed. “But many of this subculture are not outdoor experts, they’re experts in the technological products that businesses sell to people to participate in the outdoors.”

“So, what you’re saying is that for many outdoor education programs it’s not about education anymore, but about making money and about creating consumers of outdoor products, right?” I asked. Simon tweaked his hand left and right. “The thing that rubs me, like Goodman and Knapp¹³⁶ argue, is that this creates a generation of professionals, like Jane, who are able to preach the tomes of Miles and Priest,¹³⁷ but not actually show any thought beyond those glib expressions, right?” I asked.

“In a way, James,” said Simon. “But I don’t think that’s why people get involved in the field, and Barnes¹³⁸ agrees. I think it’s just what practitioners have become accustomed to. In turn, it’s what their clients and participants have become accustomed to. This has created what Roberts¹³⁹ describes, *the death of experience* in outdoor and experiential education. Where clients, like high school principals, schedule a ropes course program and assume that it will promote leadership in his students, rather than actually working with the ropes course provider to ensure this is the actual focus of the program. Because outdoor educators have to compete with each other to define themselves as successful, they’re more than willing to agree to whatever the client wants, rather than considering whether their program is suitable to the client’s needs.” said Simon. He was staring at me. I was sure I was raising my eyebrow, partly in confusion

¹³⁶ (Goodman & Knapp, 1981).

¹³⁷ (Miles & Priest, 1999).

¹³⁸ (Barnes, 2003).

¹³⁹ (Roberts, 2004).

and partly in intrigue. “The only problem is that in a Western rationalistic-based ideology, people tend to get caught up in the same. They copy each other based on the images we see, the texts we read, and the actions we take. So, because sensationalism sells and makes money, people continue to deliver activities like white-water rafting or high ropes programs. Even if it’s not a traditional practice for the environment their operation is located in,” explained Simon.

“Oh, like the use of artificial whitewater parks, eh? I thought it was funny when I read an article titled *Adventure Recreation* by Mooreman, Schlatter, and Hurd¹⁴⁰ in the *Journal of Physical Education and Recreation*. They opened their article with a discussion of Richard Louv’s¹⁴¹ writings about how children today don’t get in touch with nature and how this is creating issues of obesity and attention deficit disorder. How getting outdoors and immersed in natural environments through adventure recreation activities that use the natural environment have the potential to curve this effect. Then, the authors went on to discuss how artificial whitewater paddling parks, high ropes courses, and other artificial attractions serve to get kids and other people living in urban environments outdoors. All I could do was laugh at the irony when I read this. That’s part of the contradiction you’re trying to explain?”

“Yeap!” Simon said. “Bringing it back to your story Lou, remember how Outdoor Ed had to invite Jane’s group up to eat, and, in turn, had a very short lunch? During that time, he was being bombarded with questions from Jane about equipment for a program he wasn’t involved in. For Jane it seems like the equipment was the most

¹⁴⁰ (Mooreman, Schlatter & Hurd, 2007).

¹⁴¹ (Louv, 2005).

important part that made the program possible, even if she didn't know what equipment she was asking for. Not the people. This seems sad," said Simon.

"Scary. too," said Mike. "If she wasn't able to recognize a piece of equipment she was supposed to have, why was she the one providing such a high risk activity?"

"Good point! She probably shouldn't have. The only thing I can link this idea to is James' research which illustrates that qualified professionals have been replaced with cheaper, less qualified or even unqualified staff. She was probably part of that group. That's not Jane's fault. But what is even more disconcerting is that it seems the meals at the centre were just a time to feed people. Remember how Lou described how Ed had to get Jane's group up to the buffet? Sounds like a farmer herding cattle to feeding troughs. This job was supposed to be the responsibility of the person in charge of the group. I think it's clear that community was not the focus of this program, but, instead, it was the amount of activities that could be sold to the client. For most outdoor education consumers, the main criteria seem to be trying something close to home that's new, fun, and safe. They want predictability.¹⁴² The problem is that these clients are often doing the opposite. They're still interested in trying something new, it's just usually more dangerous and at times further away from home," said Simon.

"This links back to the need to understand our ¹own local ecosystems. What Bowers¹⁴³ describes as the commons we share with all living creatures. Martin and Thomas¹⁴⁴ argue a person's interpersonal relationship with nature grows with their

¹⁴² (Beames, 2006).

¹⁴³ (Bowers, 1998, 2006).

¹⁴⁴ (Martin & Thomas, 2000).

exposure and experience in nature. However, if you look at another study by Martin¹⁴⁵ on the use of outdoor adventure activities like whitewater rafting, his argument reads more like a justification for the use of high intensity outdoor pursuits as the basis for his own postsecondary outdoor education programs rather than promoting an educational understanding in his students about their relationship to their immediate ecosystem. He argues that adventure activities provide students with an *excuse* to get outdoors and fosters an emotional attachment to the outdoors. I don't devalue those findings. From personal experience, outdoor pursuits can foster emotional connections to the environment. But his reasons for producing this study seem to be in response to a workshop held at the 13th Annual Australia Outdoor Education Conference by Lugg and Gaetcher¹⁴⁶ where they challenged the adventure activity model they argue dominates outdoor education practices in Australia. Lugg and Gaetcher were interested in exploring the justifications for including activities, such as whitewater paddling and rock climbing, in Australian outdoor education programs, arguing from research and personal teaching experience that these activities were not of native origin to Australian culture and may not be the most effective way to meet educational goals," said Lou.

"Yeah?" I said. "I think I know what you're talking about. It's like in Simon's story when Outdoor Ed asked his students what they were thinking about when they reached the top of the Pamper Pole. He usually got one of two answers: *I'm not thinking* or *how am I going to stand on this?* Looking at this example, it makes one wonder if

¹⁴⁵ (Martin, 2004).

¹⁴⁶ (Lugg & Gaetcher, 2003).

learning actually occurs when students engage in these experiences. Crossland¹⁴⁷ questions this, too. It's one thing to provide students with a challenge they can tackle to create learning opportunities. It's another thing to place them in a novel, risky situation where learning is thrown out the door along with thinking."

"Yes, James. This raises a question about Martin's¹⁴⁸ argument that high intensity outdoor adventure activities should be the basis of an educational program. It raises the question whether students are actually learning at all. I argue that adventure education is an example of how outdoor education can contribute to perpetuating a hyper-separation between Western rationalist culture that treats nature as other, rather than educates and connects students about nature. This is the sense that human beings are separate from nature because postindustrial society has developed an aversion to nature because people are willing to live in urban environments surrounded by industrially manufactured artifacts. In adventure education high ropes courses are the clear examples of how adventure education, even if it is surrounded by nature, is still disconnected from nature. A culture that perpetuates a rift between humans and nature must take some responsibility for the ecological crisis. This is why writers in the field of outdoor and environmental education have described this disconnection between people and the natural world. That's why many of them are calling for a paradigm shift, so that humans can read a discourse that encourages participants to develop deeper educational relationships with the natural world.¹⁴⁹

The only problem is that some writers in adventure education feel threatened by this,

¹⁴⁷ (Crossland, 2008).

¹⁴⁸ (Martin, 2004).

¹⁴⁹ (Preston, 2004).

more concerned with making money and maintaining their activities as the status quo instead of asking if what they are doing is actually educational,” said Lou.

Reconsidering How to Define Adventure

“I understand what you’re saying, Lou, but I don’t completely agree. You see, my students and I participate in a canoe trip or snowshoeing trip in the Canadian wilderness. There’s something Canadian about experiencing a canoe or snowshoe trip.¹⁵⁰ It’s a window into Canadian culture and stories. Upon return, we make links to living the lessons we learned on our wilderness trip in our daily lives. For example, the skills of reading and writing are used as tools to explore these lessons,” said Mike.

“But, Mike, the difference between what your trip and other adventure activities is that it’s part of a larger educational program. What Lou is describing is how, like Henderson¹⁵¹ argues, outdoor educators have taken nature and place out of the discipline. Predominantly, the use of outdoor pursuits today is justified as something educational, but, like Brookes¹⁵² argues, it’s a form of shallow outdoor education where the title *education* is affixed to outdoor recreational pursuits-based programs for the purpose of attracting paying clients, like educational groups, to their programs,” explained Simon.

“I think the key words here are *client* and *student*. The origin of the word *client* was borrowed from the Anglo-French word *client* meaning one who engages in the services of a professional adviser like a lawyer.¹⁵³ While the origin of the word *student* is

¹⁵⁰ (Elrick, 2007).

¹⁵¹ (Henderson, 2007).

¹⁵² (Brookes, 1993).

¹⁵³ (Barnhart, 1988).

borrowed from the Latin word *studēre*, which means one who studies in the pursuit of knowledge,”¹⁵⁴ I said. Mike laughed.

“James, I love how you know the origins of those strong words. You’re right, Simon, what I do is different. It’s only human to ask for clarity and asking for clarity is a path to learning, this may be part of James’ faultline between peak adventures and aesthetic adventures. Maybe it’s not a faultline about the types of adventures, but, instead, a faultline between what’s commercial and what’s educational,” Mike exclaimed. “Another way to ask for clarity is to go on journeys, so I frame my program as a journey. With my students we first head on an upstream journey at the start of my course with a wilderness trip. We practice the traditional travel skills of the region and read stories of previous travelers,” Mike explained. Lou raised her hand to make a comment.

“I agree, Mike,” said Lou. “The concept of a journey can promote learning. Journeys can promote exploration and discovery. Journey’s can help spark and maintain student curiosity.¹⁵⁵ But journeying can also distract students from making connections with the land. From personal experiences I’ve seen students get so caught up in reaching a destination that the environment becomes a backdrop to the activity. Only careful planning and facilitation by practitioners can overcome this urge to rush. This shouldn’t be done just a few days before starting the journey, it needs planning and shouldn’t happen just over a short period of time like a few weeks.”

¹⁵⁴ (Barnhart, 1988).

¹⁵⁵ (Elrick, 2007).

“You’re right, Lou. Drasdo¹⁵⁶ would agree, too,” I added. “He argued that outdoor educators should try and arrange that students can see a particular area in different seasons, rather than see it in one spell. He argues that this is the difference between providing direct experiences with nature or providing contrived experiences. This is what I like about foraging for wild edibles.”

“I agree, Lou and James, that’s why later in the course we learn about our community. Next, we take to the streets on bicycles.¹⁵⁷ First, learning the rules of the road and cycling as a form of transportation, and then we use cycling to help us get around Guelph and research issues in the community. This turns the community into the classroom. Later, my students teach a program called Earthkeepers to hundreds of grade 5 students from our school board. This is a 3 day program designed to teach students to lessen their impact on the earth and share this knowledge with others. The program fosters relationships between my high school students and the elementary students. My students gain hands-on teaching experiences. The elementary students get a chance to meet older students from their communities. At the end of the course, my students spend a day in our home community executing an Active Citizenship Day. By consensus, they carry out an idea in small groups on how to better their community. Then, do it without direct teacher supervision. Then, their CELP program ends with friends and family at a closing ceremony where the students share slides and quotes from the semester.¹ This ceremony is meant as a transitional moment as the students return to their home schools with half of their grade 10 requirements,”¹⁵⁸ Mike described.

¹⁵⁶ (Drasdo, 1973).

¹⁵⁷ (Elrick, 2007).

¹⁵⁸ (Elrick, 2007).

“Your program sounds interesting, Mike,” said Lou. “It seems to me that you teach about your community through multiple lenses. You teach them about the connections Canadians attach to wilderness travel. You teach them about sustainability issues in their home community. You teach them to teach younger students about the environment, to give back to their community, and you teach them how to reflect on their journeys. I teach my students in a similar way. But instead of framing it as a journey, I teach them how to construct a story about a place,” said Lou. “In my course the highlight is travelling to a naturally protected area. However, throughout the duration of the course, we do what you argued, James, and ask our students to make regular visits to a natural area of their own choosing. But we don’t just leave it up to them to learn about their place, we guide their learning by assigning students to explore various ways of knowing their place. Each experience is framed to explore that place in a specific way such as experientially, to identify the flora, to discover its European history, or to search for native wild edibles.”¹⁵⁹

“Neat,” I said. Mike and Simon nodded their heads.

“There’s more. Most visits require some research to help them unravel the stories embedded in their place such as interviewing local people, reading local history books, looking at geology and historical maps, taking yoga classes to focus the mind, or making sketches of their place. This engages students in seeking information and skills relevant to their place. It encourages them to take charge of their learning. What it also does is teach them how to read the landscape of their local environment and become more conscious of their role in it.

¹⁵⁹ (Preston, 2004).

“This was evident on our wilderness bushwalking trip to Borhoneyghurk Common which is part of the Lal Lal State Forest.¹⁶⁰ This was an area that students were already familiar with because they had frequented it earlier in their education when they practiced navigation. The location we decided to explore was actually my place, an area of degraded farmland which has evidence of human use, particularly gold mining. To highlight the signs of gold mining on the landscape the students had previously visited Sovereign Hill, a museum in Ballarat depicting a township on the goldfields in the 1850s. The purpose of the visit was to help expand what students could see in landscape on our bushwalk. The numerous rock piles scattered through the Common were now viewed not as rubble, but as human artifacts, like the remains of fireplaces, that framed simple shelters. Landmarks to avoid during orienteering could now be seen as working mines. As their journey continued, students continued to see the stories in the place such as recognizing flora, sharing their knowledge of native plant foods, deciphering wallaby and koala scats, and became aware of the diversity of moss and lichen. At the end of the course, the students commented that they felt they had developed a set of skills they could use to read other landscapes. This was accomplished, like you, Mike, with my co-instructor and my own educational vision to teach students to read the landscape of a place through multiple lenses.”¹⁶¹ Lou smiled and sighed. We all looked at the fire.

¹⁶⁰ (Preston, 2004).

¹⁶¹ (Preston, 2004).

“You know, Lou, thinking back to your story about Outdoor Ed and how his program contrasts with Mike’s and your own course,” I said, “What’s become clear to me is that both your courses were guided by a vision that I describe as a personal educational philosophy. Mike, yours is linked to engaging students in learning about their local community. Lou, your educational philosophy was guided by teaching students to interpret their immediate landscape. Outdoor Ed didn’t have a personal educational philosophy. The programs he delivered were decided by another person. Remember when he was lifeguarding and his supervisor decided to change his schedule, sending down another group? This demonstrates that. At this point in his career it’s clear he was changing. This can be seen in his desire to develop a curriculum linked program that focused on teaching students to read the natural landscape of the centre. Raffan¹⁶² argues that outdoor education programs that survive in Ontario are programs directly linked to the province’s educational curriculum. The program he was trying to develop did not match with the skill dependent, equipment intensive outdoor pursuits based approach his centre was providing. I think he made a good decision at the end of his story to finish his contract and move on. It was time for him.”

“Barnes¹⁶³ would agree,” said Simon. “He argues that people in the fields of outdoor education and outdoor recreation often identify on a personal level with their jobs. In outdoor organizations, there is usually a shared purpose between the employer and the employee where they both identify with their organization’s aims. The problem arises when outdoor professionals start believing, that this always occurs because it

¹⁶² (Raffan, 1996).

¹⁶³ (Barnes, 2003).

doesn't. This is because people change like Outdoor Ed. When change occurs where the employees' aims no longer match the employers, Barnes argues, this can cause alienation and strain on the relationship," explained Simon.

Value of Personal Educational Philosophies

"That's why I feel it would have been beneficial for Outdoor Ed to develop a personal educational philosophy and write out a short one page description of it. Like Donaldson¹⁶⁴ argues, it's important for people involved in outdoor education, even camp directors, to review the kind of program they are delivering and the one they want to deliver. This could be the next step he could do after the end of your story, Lou, when he was cooling off his head instead of thinking what centre he could work at next. This links back to the centre-based dependency that outdoor educators think they have to submit to in Ontario. I'm starting to think that this is a fallacy, too. After all, as Raffan¹⁶⁵ describes, it's these barriers we've erected that distinguish our practice from that of ordinary teachers that have caused our fate to be threatened.

"But this discourse even today, can still be seen in the recent C.O.E.O. document *Reconnecting Children to the Outdoors*. Foster and Linney argue that, *OEE is a distinctive methodology carried out through the implementation of safe and effective programs by experienced outdoor educators*.¹⁶⁶ They argue that because there have been several studies documenting that teachers tend to avoid outdoor activities because they are frequently unfamiliar with the philosophy, technique and organization of using the

¹⁶⁴ (Donaldson, 1950).

¹⁶⁵ (Raffan, 1996).

¹⁶⁶ (Foster & Linney, 2007, p. 23).

*outdoors as an effective medium for teaching. Realizing that teachers face restrictions of time, resources and support, they should not be expected to be the sole facilitator of OEE for students. Trained outdoor educators at outdoor education centres are central to providing the well-rounded education that children deserve.*¹⁶⁷ I agree that teachers have

several restrictions and knowledge about how to deliver outdoor education programs.

But reflecting on the comments of Don Colby published in 1981 in *The Globe and Mail*,¹⁶⁸ it's clear that outdoor educators once worked within the schools themselves. I argue that's where outdoor educators should begin to refocus their efforts, instead of still thinking, like Outdoor Ed, about what centre they could work at next," I explained.

"That's why it's important to examine our practice, and what we do as educators. More specifically, outdoor educators," said Mike. The fire was reaching a low glow. The heat began to crumble the burnt logs into hot ash. On the periphery, shadows began to engulf the campfire circle. Mike reached down and grabbed the pack of hot dogs he had brought to the campfire, "The fire's just about perfect. Anyone want a dog?" Simon nodded, holding a thin long stick that broke out into a 'y' at the end. Lou nodded her head.

"Yeah, I'll have one, too." Mike poked a dog onto a stick of his own and passed the package my way. "But in a 2005 article published in the *Toronto Star*, Mike, you were quoted saying what you do is not outdoor education, simply education?"¹⁶⁹ I'm confused," I asked, scratching my head. Mike slid his stick through his dog and held it over the hot coals.

¹⁶⁷ (Foster & Linney, 2007, p. 23).

¹⁶⁸ (Truman, 1981).

¹⁶⁹ (Smith, 2005, p. H04).

“Well, like Smith describes in his article, in my practice I view the environment not as a *thing* separate from people's daily lives, but woven through every piece of our being.¹⁷⁰ As an educator, I view the environment around me as a central source where students can develop impressions and knowledge about our world. The same world that the Ontario government expects students to learn and teachers to teach as mandated in the Ontario curriculum. Like I said, it's just good education to use the immediate environment I dwell in because it's where my students dwell, too. So, that's where I teach and that's where my students learn. In turn, I learn, too,” Mike replied. I stretched my hotdog over the hot coals of the fire. Everyone did the same.

“Okay, Mike, I get that; but why don't you want to be labeled as an outdoor educator?” I asked. Mike was silent for a moment. He scratched his forehead and then opened his mouth in reply, stopped, and then opened his mouth again.

“Well, let's put it this way, James. You're the graduate student. You've read a lot about outdoor education. You've even been employed as an outdoor educator. Why do you think I don't want to be labeled as outdoor educator?” Mike smiled.

“So you're turning the question back on me?” Drasdo¹⁷¹ would argue, you're teasing the answer from me,” I laughed. So did the others. “Okay . . . well . . . I'll try and answer. Well . . . it's like . . . oh! It's like what Julian Smith wrote about back in 1972. He wrote that there are many dialogues in the field of outdoor education. Many are so caught up in defining their own terminologies that it's important to remember that amongst the diversity that *those in outdoor education come from all segments of the*

¹⁷⁰ (Smith, 2005, p. H04).

¹⁷¹ (Drasdo, 1973).

*educational family. We are teachers and administrators, generalists and specialists and represent many of the “respectable” academic disciplines. It should be remembered that everyone views things from different perspectives.*¹⁷² This means this form of, *education is further complicated because many of the proponents are outside the school and quite unfamiliar with curriculum building including the process of developing instructional materials geared to local needs.*¹⁷³ This is what Drasdo¹⁷⁴ warned his readers about.

That outdoor education must vary its programs according to circumstances offered in the terrain available, related to aspects of the environment from where the youngster comes, and cater to the individuality of each student. What you're interested in, Mike, is teaching students about the local. Your programs are geared towards the local needs of your students and community. Getting labeled as an outdoor educator might label you with a larger group of people who would rather contrast themselves as different from mainstream education, instead of understanding that we're all trying to work towards the same purpose . . . in our own ways. It's like Brookes'¹⁷⁵ study Lou talked about, where the local is often overshadowed in the outdoor education literature, instead proffering a universal perspective. But that's not what outdoor education is really about. It's like Smith¹⁷⁶ wrote: it should be about the local even if universal skills, like interpreting the landscape, are taught,” I argued.

“That’s part of it!” Mike said. “But-” Simon put out his hand, motioning for Mike to stop. I pulled my hotdog from the fire to see if it was ready. It wasn’t.

¹⁷² (Smith, 1972, p. 24).

¹⁷³ (Smith, 1972, p. 24).

¹⁷⁴ (Drasdo, 1973).

¹⁷⁵ (Brookes, 2004).

¹⁷⁶ (Smith, 1972).

“Mike, I’d like to take it from here,” Simon interrupted. Mike swung out his hand, motioning in invitation for Simon to continue. Simon nodded. I turned my head to look in his direction. “Very good, James, but that was in the early 1970s. The question that Mike, Lou, and I are trying to get you to think about is why today would it be better to think beyond outdoor education?”

“Well, I don’t know,” I replied. Simon nodded. Lou shook her head. Mike held out his hand, motioning that he wanted to speak again.

“Simon, I think it might be best to tell James a story first. I haven’t shared one. Maybe after my story James will have something more to talk about.” Simon nodded. Mike continued, “I call this story: Wherever you go there you are, so remember stories are powerful.¹⁷⁷ I borrowed the first part of this title from author Jon Kabat-Zinn,¹⁷⁸ who writes it’s important to meditate in our daily lives. He argues that educators need to be aware of what they are doing in the moment because that’s what’s truly important, instead of what’s awaiting us in the future. This story is about an outdoor educator who began to think about what he was doing in the moment. That’s enough information for now, so I’ll begin.”

¹⁷⁷ (M. Connolly, personal communication, October 14, 2008).

¹⁷⁸ (Kabat-Zinn, 2006).

Chapter Eight: Wherever You Go There You Are - So Remember Stories Are Powerful

There was once an outdoor educator who believed that examining one's professional purpose should be a good thing for anyone to do. He had read a vast amount of literature from the field and recognized that a diversity of authors, such as Higgins and Nicol,¹⁷⁹ Lugg,¹⁸⁰ and Wurdinger,¹⁸¹ all suggest that outdoor educators regularly examine the educational rationale underpinning their activity choices.¹⁸² But this outdoor educator was different. He thought, why do these authors only encourage me to examine the rationale for my activity choices? For some time he had wondered, what about my program? More importantly, what about me? How does what I do as an outdoor educator fit my own educational rationale? What is my educational rationale? Do I have one? He thought, sometimes I feel some proponents in this field get caught up reflecting and researching the benefits of outdoor education, while ignoring what the practitioners, outdoor educators like himself, are doing. For several years he had been working as an outdoor experiential educator at a not-for-profit outdoor centre. One day he found himself thinking about two critical incidents he had lived in his practice. His first critical incident happened when he realized the redundancy in the way ropes course instructors communicated with their 'about to climb' participants. †

"What questions are you suppose to ask?" the instructor would say.

"Uh, I donno?" participants often replied.

¹⁷⁹ (Higgins & Nicol, 2002)

¹⁸⁰ (Lugg, 2004).

¹⁸¹ (Wurdinger, 1994).

¹⁸² (Beames, 2006).

“Ask your team if they are on belay,” the instructor would ask.

“Are you on belay?” the participant would say.

“Yes,” the participant’s belay team would reply. The participant would then begin to climb.

“Woah! Where are you going?” The instructor would ask. Then, the student would look at the instructor. The instructor would say, “You have to wait for me to give you the ‘okay’.” Now that you’ve made sure your belay team is ready, ask me if you are ready to climb.”

“Are you ready to climb?” The student would ask.

“Yes, go ahead.” The instructor would nod. The participant would begin to climb. To him, it seemed silly that other instructors never realized that each participant would ask the instructor if he was ready to climb. Most of his colleagues just seemed to be going through the motions. But the outdoor educator thought, these commands I use are redundant. The approach needs to be changed. So he decided a direct conversation would be a better approach. The outdoor educator would ask participants direct questions and engage them in the pre-climbing inspection process. “Do you think these people are ready to belay you?” Each student would take a few seconds to think about it. He would perform a visual equipment check of the equipment. When ready, the instructor would then prompt the student to begin climbing, asking “Are you ready to climb?” The outdoor educator thought, by encouraging climbers to be involved in the inspection process they may be less tempted to rush into their climb.

His second critical incident occurred during a conversation with a group of his colleagues around the lunch table. A technician indicated her frustration in taking down

and putting up the rock wall twice one morning. This staff member indicated that this situation was becoming a regular occurrence. The outdoor educator recommended 'doing what he did,' each morning, which was asking each technician scheduled to use the rock climbing wall when they were using it.

"That's too hard," the technician replied. Then, the technician gossiped about how her supervisor would get defensive if they did anything about it, even when they're just trying to improve things. The outdoor educator was unsettled by the pattern he saw emerging between these two experiences. A sense of redundancy embodied in the cultural practices of his outdoor education centre: (a) at the instructional level, and (b) at the interpersonal level with his colleagues. Looking for answers, he turned to the literature of his field.

Appealing to the Popular Literature

He first appealed to the popular '*Adventure Programming*' manual edited by Miles and Priest.¹⁸³ But he soon realized these theories didn't deal with problems, so they couldn't assist him with the issues he was beginning to see in his practice. He concluded it may be literature like this that was part of the problem. He felt the literature was too prescriptive, and wondered why the authors couldn't share some stories from their own practice. If they were real outdoor educators they should have some good ones. After all, he often felt he learned more from the stories his peers told him and that they too learned from the stories he told them. He was certain his story was not unique and

¹⁸³ (Miles & Priest, 1999).

other practitioners were experiencing similar situations. So, he searched for other views about outdoor education.

Next, he discovered a growing body of increasingly complex critical outdoor education theory. Excited about this different source of knowledge, he attempted to extract and synthesize points from this literature that he thought he could use in the field.¹⁸⁴ Maybe these theories will provide me with ways to approach my problems, he thought. But after a few attempts putting these theories to the test, the outdoor educator realized that theories alone couldn't provide him the answers he was looking for. So, for several days he thought about what he was doing. He often thought why can't I put any of these theories directly into practice? So, he started writing down ideas about the theories he was reading, but quickly grew tired of that. One day he decided to just write about his practice.

At first he found it difficult. Often times he found himself starting journal entries, scratching them out, starting again, then tearing a page out of his book. Then one day he decided to just write about what he was feeling . . . in the moment. He wrote: I'm pretty tired after a hot work day and am concerned because my daily reflections are slipping from their regular schedule. This is occurring especially when I start my time off, primarily because I perceive that I want to get away from work. So, he kept writing and, through this process, he began to see problems emerging in the routines of what he did when he had time off for a few days. He discovered that: I have a beer when I get home, ponder periodically that I should write my reflection on the day, and then remind myself that I should write for the entire time off before I actually write about it. The outdoor

¹⁸⁴ (Beames, 2006).

educator decided to change his behavior and continued to write. He started to realize at a deeper level that sometimes it takes me 3 days to gather my thoughts to reflect about a day. I guess sometimes I will need a few days to think about things.

Going Critical

After reading some of his written reflections one day, he began to recognize changes in the way he was conducting himself. For him, these changes seemed to be spiraling out from the first two critical incidents that encouraged him to write. Reflecting on his practice at the ropes course, he wrote: it is important to put on a show. It's part of the craft. I'm not juggling balls or doing anything fancy, but a show is important. To do this I first refer to individuals as either Sir or Miss to get their attention, especially if I don't know their name. Then I ask them, "What's your name?" so that I can use it. I use these terms because they're the same ones that the school participants often use to get my attention. Some of my peers make fun of me for this, but I don't care about their opinion because it often develops a rapport of respect between the students and me. Even when the group I'm working with may be one I dislike. This is because my gut tells me it's important to treat people as people, not as another material to push through an assembly line.

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The outdoor educator also wrote: it's important to simply talk and share stories about early ropes course experiences from my life, or a few logical fabrications. It bridges the gap between the participant's nervousness and my social competency as an experienced ropes course instructor. In addition, I also make an effort to try and show participants what to physically do on the ropes course, by physically touching the first

few holds they are supposed to use to climb. By doing this, I feel I am communicating at their level. This is an area of competence I feel many instructors need to work on because I feel it is a requirement that I make an effort to connect with the people I am serving . . . on a human level. By sharing stories with my participants about what I understand has gone on in my mind on a ropes course element, it will allow them insight into the experience they are about to have as well as judge my ability to manage the social side of their event. This is something that I feel is often missing from an instructor who focuses just on the technical skills. It's important to have the ability to be a technician, a ropes course instructor, and even as an outdoor leader or educator. But my technical skills aren't what make me a good instructor or outdoor educator. It's my ability to be human. To be human doesn't mean that I think I can read other people. I'm not concerned with trying to convince myself that I'm good at reading people like many technicians tell me they're good at. Like I just wrote, I'm simply interested in being human. By being human, I can relate to my participants as people and try my best to cater to their individual needs, rather than trying to put them through the same metaphorical mould.¹⁸⁵

Working with his colleagues, the other outdoor educators and technicians he worked alongside, he wrote: I've learned that they often talk about me without me. Some think they can read me, but become frustrated when they can't or I do something they don't expect. I had a talk with the outdoor education supervisor. She indicated that the

¹⁸⁵ (Drasdo, 1973).

technicians had asked her to tell me that they wanted more opportunities to facilitate ropes course activities and handle the equipment. So, she recommended that I ask them what they want to do each day. If they don't know (which is what they usually say), I should make suggestions. She indicated that if a technician complained about this approach that I should tell her. She would schedule a talk with that individual because at that point they are not doing their job. I felt supported by her comments.

The following day, walking down to the ropes course, the outdoor educator opened a discussion with the technician he was working with that day. He asked her what she wanted to lead. The technician decided she wanted to run it all, the harnessing and helmets, and lead the show at the ropes course. But she didn't want to show the participants how to belay. So, the outdoor educator introduced how to belay. Then, the technician took the show, leading the ropes course experience. In his journal the outdoor educator wrote: I stood back for support and stepped in when needed. She did a pretty good job. Throughout the program we discussed how to tie knots; we taught clients how to tie knots. The technician was excited about lowering each participant down from the course.

"Sit down in your harness and hold onto your rope above the knot for support." The technician would say. When the participant did, she would say, "Great, we'll get you down." When she needed me to help, she would give me a simple glance. This made the show run smoothly.

"I got it." I would say as I jumped in.

"K," the technician would say. Little else needed to be communicated between the technician and the outdoor educator. The outdoor educator kept reminding himself

that he had also once needed this type of mentoring when he had first started to work as a ropes course instructor. Modeling played an important role. So, he decided he would continue to be a good role model for these technicians. After all, maybe one day they would decide to become outdoor educators as well.

As he worked on being a good role model for his colleagues, he discovered that the way he approached his clients and colleagues was changing. Reflecting on a ropes course program he facilitated, he wrote: At the ropes course talking and explaining activities in a calm clear voice and keeping messages short keeps my clients calm. Discussing this approach with a colleague of mine, she indicated that the clients had told her that my soothing voice helped, especially since it had been raining. She thanked me as well. We had discussed this approach as our plan for running the program after I shared a story about what a past mentor of mine had told me about the benefits of using a calm soothing voice during ropes course programs. It was gratifying to receive compliments from my clients and colleague about this approach, but I feel it is part of my job. I replied with a simple thank you because I didn't want to become larger than life in the eyes of these people. I intentionally humbled my response so that it was short and polite. I feel this displays a type of character I want to exhibit when I'm facilitating activities and working with my colleagues. I feel this is a social tool rather than a program tool. It's not something I do to enhance my programs or instructions. This is because I think every facilitator has that moment when they either capture the group or lose them. This will determine whether the group calls the facilitator a professional. With this group, when I used a calm voice at the ropes course I think it made them more confident in me. That's when I captured them.

From this experience, I believe that clients want an outdoor educator who is not worried or looks worried. For me, if I can act calm by applying a calm voice when I'm facilitating and sharing stories about my personal experiences, my clients then may feel more comfortable with me and recognize me as a competent facilitator and person. So, I'm going to try this approach again this week and see if the same happens. This calm approach doesn't mean I'm not allowed to be crazy, it just means that I use a calm approach when dealing with the clients. It seems when I use this approach I get people asking more questions because they feel comfortable asking questions. If I play off them they see my humbleness and understand that sometimes they need to ask questions to illuminate the bigger picture. So, the outdoor educator planned to use his calm approach in the future.

A few days later he wrote: I'm writing this a few days after the date. I needed a few days to clear my head so I went home for the weekend. I had a day off on Monday, too, so now I'm writing this at 12:01am Tuesday morning. What was interesting was a conversation that occurred between a colleague and me at the ropes course. Recently, I have been finding with the technicians that the stepping back makes me look like a leader. At high ropes today a technician turned to me and said, "I don't know what to do." I reminded her that she had decided to lead the program. So she did. That let me step back, watch, and learn from her. I began to learn her adaptations to things, and pick up some new ideas.

Writing out these thoughts he realized that writing clarifies things, it put his ideas down on paper so that he could return to them and reflect. Reaching this resolution about writing, he began to appreciate how his thoughts about practice were deepening. After

facilitating ropes course programs he was now writing thoughts like: I always emphasize to the teachers that it's not the climbing that involves the teamwork they are asking for, but the belaying that is the challenge. The teachers don't always see it that way. I guess teachers are just unaware, but from my perspective it is a lot harder for students to stay belaying than it is for them to climb.

The outdoor educator's thoughts began to reach beyond the ropes course. The technicians he worked with were taking more ownership over facilitating ropes course programs. He was continuing to teach using a calm voice. Through his writing, he realized that he was becoming aware of other interests and problems in his practice. For example, in his journal he wrote, sometimes programs, like stream studies, run themselves. After showing the kids the identification charts, they just jump into the creek, find insects, and come back to me to help them identify what they found. I started testing the identification ability of the kids, and began to think about writing a grade 11 and 12 biology program using the stream studies equipment. In the program, students could collect aquatic organisms as bio-indicators of the water quality in our creek. Today I feel I was checking out how easily it was for the kids to identify these organisms. They did well, except for one case where we found something that wasn't on the chart.

So, he decided to design his stream studies program. In his journal he wrote: Designing programs is a joy. Over the past few days I've had a lot of freedom to research and design new programs for the outdoor center. Linking the centre's old programs to the government education standards is a relaxing job, and designing new programs has taken me to a new area in my career. In my past, I only facilitated the programs that were packaged for me to deliver. I had the choice of how to run high ropes,

but high ropes was what I was hired to deliver, not create and design. I think designing is fun.

At that time, the outdoor educator continued to write about issues he experienced in the field. One issue he wrote about was delivering and debriefing programs at the low ropes course. In his journal he wrote: Sometimes people take spills at low ropes and those moments are real learning opportunities. Spills are not something I feel I need to worry about or control. Spills are part of life, they are something that I try and talk about, so that everyone can learn. Spotting can always be improved and is a great way to learn about supporting people. But talking about spills allows students to evaluate an immediate critical experience, plan a solution to the problem, and make connections to other experiences like working on a group essay at school.

However, reflecting on a routine debrief at the low ropes course, the outdoor educator began to write about the one word answers he would often receive from students. He referred to these answers as recipe list responses. In his journal he wrote: Recipe list responses may lead to other responses or provide times when I should challenge them, so that I, the facilitator, can get at the deeper issue of placation and trickery in the group's social interaction. I politely challenge these responses by asking for examples, "like what or why?" When these students respond with examples, they often seem to make connections to their home life. But, when students say, "I don't know," it shows other students their dishonesty when they can't come up with an answer.

So, the outdoor educator continued to ask, "Why?" when clients replied with a recipe list answer. But at the same time, the outdoor educator was having a hard time encouraging his colleagues to clean up the equipment room. Deciding to solve the

problem, the outdoor educator wrote: It was important to me to stay in the equipment room and get the job done. When I found myself talking about the issue, I realized I really didn't want to discuss the issue. The room needed to be cleaned. Afterwards, people began to make comments on how good it looked. This is the type of role modeling that I feel should happen here and in outdoor education in general. This is because I feel that talking about doing things can only go so far and eventually things really need to be done. When cleaning the equipment room, I asked several people what they wanted accomplished and blended these ideas with my own, but I also remembered that when it came down to it they had done nothing. So, I did something and I'll keep myself posted about its effect through my writing. So, he continued to write. The outdoor educator started to recognize another pattern emerging in his practice. This time though, he realized he recognized it because he had been keeping a record of his experiences in his practice.

Discussing Mike's Story

"That's my story," Mike said.

"Umm," I said.

"Yeah, umm?" repeated Simon. "All I can think about right now, is why did he give up so easily on trying to connect theory to practice? Whether it's traditional or critical, I think theory can help inform practitioners about their practice and make changes to it."

"I disagree, Simon. I don't think that was what Lou was trying to illuminate through her story. Remember how Outdoor Ed didn't have a personal philosophy to guide his practice? In Mike's story, remember how the outdoor educator felt?" I questioned through inquiry. Simon was silent for a moment. All I could think about was, did he miss the part where the-

"Yes, Yes! The outdoor educator just became frustrated with trying to connect any theory to his practice." Simon argued. "So, instead, he decided to write about his practice. But authors, such as O'Connell and Dymont,¹⁸⁶ argue that journal writing is an important tool for university students in outdoor recreation and outdoor education courses to synthesize how the theories they learned in the classroom apply to the experiences they have in the field components of their courses. Thinking now about the study Lou critiqued by Martin,¹⁸⁷ she forgot to mention that he reported he taught environmental theories in the classroom. That he thought these theories helped foster his student's emotional attachment to the environment."

¹⁸⁶ (O'Connell & Dymont, 2004).

¹⁸⁷ (Martin, 2004).

“But, Simon, maybe that’s the status quo,” said Mike. “Too often theory is touted as informing practice, especially by academics. But that’s their purpose. Just think about the two studies you mentioned. Both were conducted during university courses on university students, the same students that the authors were teaching. But authors of these types of studies often ignore their influence. O’Connell and Dymont¹⁸⁸ say they provided a workshop on how to write a variety of journal entries, and then tried to quantitatively measure the outcomes of their journaling workshop against a control group, but fail to mention in their results how they think their own actions influenced the outcomes of their study. The same with Martin (2004), in his results he removes himself from his writing. There’s no reflection from these authors about how they feel they may have influenced the results of their studies. This makes me wonder if theory then influenced their student’s practice, or if it was really them influencing their students. That evidence could be valuable, too. They could have an important story to share about their teaching practice. But remember academics like these, are the people who often write theory. In turn, those are also the people who value the theories developed for their field. Remember what James was saying before this story about what Smith was arguing in 1972? That there are many competing interests in the field of outdoor education, many of them know little, if anything, about developing a curriculum that reflects learning about their local environment. So, what I’m trying to tell you through this story is that when this outdoor educator in the field had finally moved away from trying to link theory to his practice, he was finally free to really investigate his practice.”

¹⁸⁸ (O’Connell & Dymont, 2004).

“Isn’t that funny, now you’re influencing the way you want the conversation to go,” said Simon.

“Yes I am,” said Mike. “The difference is that I’m not going to try and hide behind a passive voice.”

“Simon, I agree with Mike on this one. I’ve read that journal article by O’Connell and Dymnt.¹⁸⁹ It’s important to note that their study was only conducted, like you said, on university students participating in university courses. But, the main character in Lou’s story was not a university student, the same with your own story, and Mike’s. All of your stories were about practitioners. To speak from personal experience, often I find issues in practice may not have been explored in theory or theory is just not appropriate for assisting practitioners in dealing with these issues. The field is a very different place than a university classroom, be it between four walls or out in the field. Like Mike just said, moving away from trying to reflect on how theory could inform his practice, this outdoor educator was finally free to investigate his practice. That’s an important point. Often times, in graduate school I was taught that I should frame my research around a body of theory. But that’s not always how research happens. Like Lou explained, it wasn’t theory that influenced her to study her practice and change the way she taught her course, it was a problem in practice that came first.” Lou nodded her head. “After receiving a copy of Brookes’¹⁹⁰ article *Deep and Shallow Outdoor Education* from Brookes himself, I realized something. Brookes makes good points when he argues that the literature in outdoor education is based more on propagating approving words, like

¹⁸⁹ (O’Connell & Dymnt, 2004).

¹⁹⁰ (Brookes, 1993).

those written by Mortlock in his 1984 book *The Adventure Alternative*, rather than actually looking at deep issues within outdoor education. Adding more to his argument, Brookes¹⁹¹ argues that much of what guides outdoor education is derived from recreation studies, and influenced by psychotherapy and leisure theory that often emphasizes individualism. Even though outdoor education literature often expresses an interest in community, this often seems to be a nostalgic throwback to a kind of communal life with a moral-based economy that existed prior to the 1870s. Today, the world is very different, being largely a market-based economy. All this *theory influencing practice argument* does is perpetuate the self-serving interests of academics writing theory, rather than researching issues in the field of outdoor education,” I argued.

“I agree with James on that point,” Mike joined in. “But, I still think theory is important for informing practice. James, you shouldn’t devalue that. Though I argue it’s important to note that it shouldn’t be just the job of academics. The others at this conference would probably not like hearing this, but I think our group is ready for this argument. That’s probably why this outdoor educator moved away from trying to link theory to practice, because as Brookes¹⁹² argues, it’s so dislocated from practice that its relevance in assisting actual problems in the field is very little. But instead of putting down the hard work of academics, in conjunction with them, practitioners working on the front-lines should also start to contribute to theory. This is what has occurred within the field of education. But this has not predominantly happened in the field of outdoor education yet, because, like James just indicated, much of the literature supporting

¹⁹¹ (Brookes, 1993).

¹⁹² (Brookes, 1993, 2004).

outdoor education has come from the leisure, recreation, and psychotherapy fields.

Falling on my own sword, to make an unsubstantiated universal generalization, these fields of study have probably not been interested in trying to use educational research approaches or its literature in their studies. As a teacher, I consider myself a practitioner-researcher. Even though I may not produce theories and publish them in journals doesn't mean that I don't reflect and research my own practice, come up with my own theories about it, and then change my approach based on how my personal theories have shaped my perception. I feel it's important to reflect on one's own practice. Writing is one way people can record their ideas, reflect on them later, and critique their usefulness. When theory is being produced both by academics and frontline practitioners, like outdoor educators or field technicians, a broader perspective is explored. Disconnections between academia and practice can be exposed so that each can consider what problems would be best researched in the future."

"Mike, I feel it is important to make a point," I argued. "It's not that I devalue academic theory, it's just that sometimes it feels like there's something is missing. Like David Suzuki¹⁹³ wrote, scientists write using the same old boring academic format. One that removes the process of how they reached their conclusions, instead replacing the messiness of science for a clean cut description of how other scientists could replicate their study. Ellis¹⁹⁴ would argue, they tell instead of show. Suzuki¹⁹⁵ argues, that's not teaching science. The result trickles down into the school classrooms where students learn experientially that science is not messy but is the practice of following a recipe.

¹⁹³ (Suzuki, 2003b).

¹⁹⁴ (Ellis, 2004).

¹⁹⁵ (Suzuki, 2003b).

Then, it becomes no wonder why science teachers, like in my newspaper analysis, wonder why students are not becoming interested in science. It's the same self-defeating cycle. As Suzuki argues, sometimes it takes many failures before a process is found that effectively leads to a scientific discovery. The process or researcher's story may be more important than a clean cut method," I argued. Mike nodded his head.

"I see your point, James." Simon interrupted. "It's like the outdoor educator in Mike's story. It took him some time to muddle about in his journal writing process before he started to find something that worked for him. When he did, it helped him approach his colleagues and clients more effectively. Like when he reflected about the conversation he had with his supervisor about the technicians wanting more opportunities to take the lead at the ropes course. Writing down the advice from his supervisor probably helped him remember that advice. As your story went, Mike, when he applied it the next day it helped him realize that he could act in more of a mentorship role with the technicians than a direct-frontline role. That allowed him to focus on things that were more in his area of specialty like designing curriculum linked programs for the school year. It also allowed him, in the story, to realize when to keep a technician accountable for her decision to take the lead during a ropes course program. Remember what the outdoor educator told the technician who said 'I don't know what to do?' He kept her accountable to her actions by reminding her that she had chosen to take the lead. So, she continued to lead. Sometimes that's just as important a lesson to learn than to just give up and turn to someone who is more experienced. The point you seem to be making, for me, is that science is a part of nature, just like humans are. That what should be

recognized is that science should be dealt with as a human part of natural ecosystems, just as it's supposed to deal with studying other aspects of natural ecosystems.”

“This reminds me of what one of my grade 10 students wrote a few years back in his journal during our wilderness canoe trip,”¹⁹⁶ Mike added. “He described how as he sat on a rock and drank a tea, he looked around at the fog materializing off the water. He thought that was a magnificent sight and felt lucky to witness it. It was at that moment he realized that sights like that happened all the time. That nature is always present. It doesn't just perform for people when people want them to. He vowed to make an effort to try and acknowledge nature also at home and in the city. Just as my student was making an effort to acknowledge nature in the city, scientists should begin to acknowledge the nature of their studies, not just the results and the process towards those results, but the messiness that occurred on the way. Nature is all around us, even in science. Only we tend to ignore that humans are a part of nature, just like we ignore that researchers are part of their research projects.”

“That's why I used an educational epistemology and methodology when I found myself confronted with a critical incident in my own educational practice,” said Lou. “According to student feedback, the course I had been teaching on environmental interpretation had been experienced as a series of disconnected information sessions with little practical application for outdoor education. Even though students acknowledged the expertise of the guest speakers who had taught, they indicated a sense of disengagement. The abstract principles of ecological science were understood but contributed to a detached relationship with place. The problem was that knowledge was presented as static and abstracted from the social context. For

¹⁹⁶ (Elrick, 2007).

my students and myself, I realized that I was dissatisfied with the delivery of the course.¹⁹⁷

“So learning from previous experience, I decided with my co-instructor, through collaborative action research, to explore practical ways of helping people find connections with nature in local places. We decided to aim for a student-centred learning approach that engaged learners in their experiences through multiple lenses like historical, spiritual, and artistic lenses. The vision was to deepen understanding of the pedagogical issues and possibilities related to facilitating experiences in local natural environments to help counter the growing tendencies to separate humans from nature. Reflecting on the content, it seems that my hidden intention was to provide students with the skills and knowledge to enable them to identify and name aspects of any natural environment they engaged with in their outdoor travels. Formal student evaluations indicated the organization and delivery of the course supported students' learning needs. As a whole, the course was rated very high by the students,”¹⁹⁸ Lou explained.

“What’s interesting is that your experience is similar to other educators that I’ve read about, like Elizabeth Ellsworth,¹⁹⁹ who wrote an article called: *Why Doesn’t This Feel Empowering? Working through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy*. In this article, faced with a community crisis at her university provoked by a series of racist acts, Ellsworth facilitated a special topics course called “Media and Anti-Racist Pedagogies” where she planned to engage students in studying and finding solutions to the issues of

¹⁹⁷ (Preston, 2004).

¹⁹⁸ (Preston, 2004).

¹⁹⁹ (Ellsworth, 1989).

race on campus. Even though she didn't call it an action research project, that's what it became. Interested in using theoretical literature of critical pedagogy to guide her educational approach for this course, she soon discovered that these rationalist approaches of critical pedagogy to promote empowerment and liberate the student voice actually exacerbated issues of racism within her class. These theories acted to silence the diversity of student voices and ignore the situated histories of different groups within the class. So, instead of continuing to follow the literature of critical pedagogy, she shifted her approach to examine and explore the on-campus crisis of racist acts through the local perceptions of the students and engaged them in implementing acts on campus that sought to enlighten the campus about this crisis and seek solutions to the problems. In her article Ellsworth does not devalue the theories of critical pedagogy, but what she argues is that theory does not always work in practice. In fact, that theory may be more effectively developed from finding solutions to real problems faced in practice. How I connect this to your own research in practice is that you're looking at enlightening your students about issues of local diversity, too, through action like Ellsworth. It's just that the issues you're looking at relate to the divide that humans have created between themselves and their relationship with nature," I explained.

"It's interesting that you describe it that way, James, because it was recent critiques of outdoor education activities, particularly regarding the use of imported activities in the Australian context, that prompted me to reexamine my rationale for using journeying in this course.²⁰⁰ That was influenced by critical theory. Critical theory got me thinking about why outdoor educators often push to access more

²⁰⁰ (Preston, 2004).

remote locations. Remote travelling seemed so distant from students' lives. I kept asking, what is the purpose of travelling through a remote environment from one place to another? What I discovered, just as Brookes²⁰¹ argues, is that as a practitioner of outdoor education, I needed to move away from a mode of teaching that promoted a universal and decontextualized understanding of outdoor education. That's why I decided to look to a more local, specific, and contextual education," Lou explained.

"That's similar to my experience when I began reading literature that took a critical stance on the current practices in outdoor education like Brookes²⁰² does. No longer under pressure to change people's character by going camping, Brookes got me to think about my own practice. I started to ask myself, how can I replace the fundamentalist outdoor education literature which I have subscribed to and change my approach? If I didn't think that through facilitating an outdoor experience that others would have a better understanding of their interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, just what learning outcomes do I hope to elicit through my practice? I wondered if it was acceptable for me to have any predetermined outcomes for my courses. I was left wondering if I was being egotistical to hope that anyone would gain anything for participating with me on an outdoor education program. Thinking this way, I thought I might be able to create my own manifesto by combining the emerging ideas about nature and a less adrenaline-dependent approach to outdoor education activities,

²⁰¹ (Brookes, 2002)

²⁰² (Brookes, 2002).

emphasizing relationships as part of nature instead of objectifying nature,²⁰³” said Simon.

“You know, Simon, I still struggle to describe my practice. For many years, I have struggled to describe the kind of curriculum and teaching techniques I have been drawn to. When I learned about friluftsliv education from Henderson²⁰⁴ and it was described to me, I realized that it lined up with much of what I believe in. It was as if my camera lens shifted into focus. That is because, as Brookes and Dahle²⁰⁵ argue, packaging an idea like friluftsliv into one clear universal definition would put it out of context. What it seeks to promote for me is a relationship to nature through a person’s cultural context, the place where they dwell. But for you, Lou, or James it may mean something different. That’s what’s important about accepting different perspectives in outdoor education. If we all try to accept the same approach we lose something, the creative diversity of the different people who make outdoor education happen. For me, as a teacher, I make it happen through education, like I’ve said before what I do is not outdoor education, it’s just good education,” said Mike.

“I don’t get it,” I replied.

“Just think about it. Okay, better yet, let’s use the technological metaphor of driving a car. Education is my vehicle for teaching students about what I envision as nature. For me, nature is embodied in their local environment where they and I dwell.”

“Oh, okay. I think I get it. Your program isn’t meant to exist in isolation, it’s in tune with your educational philosophy. The life lessons and skills gained at CELP are meant to help students on their personal journeys,” I said.

²⁰³ (Beames, 2006).

²⁰⁴ (Henderson, 2007).

²⁰⁵ (Brookes & Dahle, 2007).

“Yes, James, I think you’re getting it,” Mike said.

“For you, Mike, it’s not an outdoor education program because it’s just school for 5 months? Right? That’s because you’re still teaching your students the curriculum. Just in a different way from other teachers, but in a similar way because you’re still accomplishing what other teachers in other schools are doing,” I said.

“That’s why reflection is so important. Because I’ve had time to reflect on my practice over my years as a teacher I know that what I share on a daily basis with my students is directly related to my own life’s journey and my personal connection to my home. So, I teach what I know. My home speaks to me. It speaks to me with stories and a connection beyond what seems possible with textbooks and simple field trips. I wonder if the education I teach is part of the missing link. This is because I feel today’s environmental learning is failing us,”²⁰⁶ Mike explained.

“James, it’s like my intentions to engage in an action research project,” Lou added. “Instead of dictating to myself that I would follow someone else’s ideas (theory) to guide my practice, this approach allowed me to take a more pragmatic approach by engaging myself in a critique of my own practice. It allowed me to explore ways that I could support the current rhetoric on improving human-nature relationships. By reflecting critically on the evolution of my outdoor education course and the narratives surrounding its delivery, a number of assumptions and flaws in my practice and thinking were examined,” Lou stated.

“That’s what’s different about you folks,” I said. “From the many practitioners who work in outdoor education using adventure education approaches, instead of

²⁰⁶ (Elrick, 2007).

following one type of universal paradigm, all three of you have questioned your own paradigms. Three different personal paradigms or, I argue, educational philosophies. These philosophies don't necessarily need to be compared to the ideas of authors like Priest's²⁰⁷ ideas of adventure because they're not about Priest, they're about you. Three people teaching in the field of outdoor education. That's why you don't call what you do, Mike, outdoor education, because, for yourself, your personal philosophical view of what you do is education."

"I think he's getting it," said Mike.

"Yep," said Simon.

"You see, James, it's not about what theories you follow. What's most important is that you follow your own story. Like Kabatt-Zinn²⁰⁸ argues as an educator it's important to know wherever you go, that you should be aware of your actions and how you influence immediate situations. When you're faced with a critical incident of practice, like an event, you reflect about it," said Mike.

"Like how the outdoor educator in your story used journaling to reflect on issues in his practice and improved upon his previous actions?" I asked.

"Not quite," Lou interjected. "It's like the second stab I took at my teaching my course on interpretation. Reflecting on my practice and taking my new approach allowed me to allow my students to develop their own stories about a place.²⁰⁹ Through this process they developed their own philosophy about their connection to nature. As the stories began to develop, stories specific to our local environment, we

²⁰⁷ (Priest, 1999)a.

²⁰⁸ (Kabat-Zinn, 2006).

²⁰⁹ (Preston, 2004).

developed skills that were transferable. Yet, the knowledge gained was local and, hopefully, more meaningful for my students and I,” Lou explained.

“So, you’re saying it’s not about improving upon previous actions, but changing them?” I asked.

“Something like that,” said Lou. Mike and Simon nodded their heads. “The problem is that if I, Mike, or Simon give you a definite answer you’ll be following one of our stories, instead of your own,” Lou explained. Looking at the fire, I realized that the low glow meant it was close to burning out. Mike dumped a bucket of water over the remains. A large billow of steam rose in the air. It was late and when the sun rose we would have to leave this outdoor centre and go on our separate ways. So, after shaking each other’s hands, I said good night and headed to bed.

Before nodding off to sleep, lying in bed I thought to myself: *that’s the central faultline in the practice of outdoor education. A faultline between how an educator’s personal story guides his practice, instead of being guided by a universal story defined by someone else.*

Coda D: Touchstoning

For the purposes of “touchstoning,” I will provide a summary which consolidates the thematic findings and the literature perspectives.

Thinking Outside the Bun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being critical of NH OAE • Personal development product of adventure education? • Rigorous research does not have to depend on psychological experimental research designs • Environmental faultline
The Shock of the Quiet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning professionalism: how bullying, gossip, and secrets affect a sense of community • Peak adventure / Aesthetic adventure faultline • Commercial / educational faultline
Wherever You Go There You Are, So Remember Stories are Powerful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The value of reflecting on practice, instead of reflecting on putting theory into practice • Practitioners should participate in the academic act of theory development and publication • Lou and Mike's personal educational philosophies • Universal story / Personal story faultline

Table 1: Touchstoning

It is important to remember that Potter and Henderson (2004) define Canadian outdoor educators as storytellers. Henderson (2005) argues that storytelling fulfills a fundamental

human need for using language. Ellis (2004) argues that telling stories allows us to share our lived experiences, and reflect on the stories we hear and tell. Bolton (1994) argues that this allows us to rethink and evaluate our actions taken in the field, and learn how to improve upon them. At outdoor centres stories are often told around a campfire, so I decided to situate the campfire discussions in that setting.

Each story acted like a compass point, directing what I would write. As Richardson (2003) argues, I also write to learn. To learn about the ideas embedded in my autoethnographic data (campfire stories). These authors provided me with narrative points to guide, as Henderson (2005) argues, theory development through storytelling. For example, the discussion surrounding *Thinking Outside the Bun* is shaped by a critical perspective of NH OAE and how this contributes to contextualizing the environmental faultline in outdoor education. *The Shock of the Quiet* examines how community is affected by factors not often discussed in the literature, such as bullying or the push for activities that provide peak adventures. This builds on the environmental faultline as the peak adventure / aesthetic adventure faultline and the commercial / educational faultline define North American social tensions that contribute to human / nature dualism. Finally, in *Wherever you go there you are, so remember stories are powerful* the dialogue initiated after this story discusses the value of reflecting directly on practice. In this discussion, Mike and Lou share their educational philosophies, showing James why it is important that outdoor educators learn to follow their own story and share it with others. This illustrates the universal story / personal story faultline, which is important to consider as this faultline dictates who is responsible within outdoor education programs to make decisions regarding how these programs are shaped and facilitated. By being

able to shape one's own professional story, practitioners begin to take ownership over how their craft is delivered.

Chapter Nine: Personal Educational Philosophy

Ellis (2004) writes at the end of her methodological novel, *The Ethnographic I*, I want to put off this chapter; then again I want to finish the book, and the manuscript feels incomplete without writing a story. A deep breath, then a sigh, reflects how daunted I feel about the task. Where do I start? (p. 331) Sitting at my computer listening to a favorite music album and typing on the screen I find myself asking, *what did I learn about myself through this project? More importantly, what did I learn about the craft of outdoor education?*

The most important lesson I have learned about this craft, as Brookes' (2003) argues, is that outdoor education "isn't one 'thing', either practically or conceptually" (p. 382). Smith (1972) argues the same. However, Brookes (2003b) argues, oftentimes it tends "to be characterised by various 'movements'. Movements are for joining, for being swept along with: 'pull together, play the game, do your bit, don't whinge or shirk. Don't be negative. Don't be critical" (p. 382). This type of approach is secular, becoming more about "shared beliefs than a shared search for truth" (p. 383). Brookes (2003b) argues as a movement, this shared ideology often seems to,

define a well-behaved academic as one who 'proves what we practitioners already know'; but this is no basis on which to conduct research or scholarly enquiry . . . movements, often seem to have a low tolerance of sustained or difficult intellectual work – 'challenge' is a term reserved for physical and psychological endeavours, not intellectual ones. But good academic work involves accepting that the truth might be more complicated than we would prefer it to be (p. 383).

Academic work involves being willing to tediously search for what is true: checking assumptions, testing arguments, learning to recognise relevant interpretations from other fields. It involves letting go of normative expectations that research contributes to ‘the movement’ (or serves the interests of existing practitioners) and asking ‘what is important, according to whose criteria about how this (outdoor) place is experienced by this community’. It involves being willing to discard cherished practices or assumptions. (p. 383)

So I have. That is because, as Goodale (1972) stated, “The real issue is to identify areas of research that are important and to stop conducting the obviously congratulatory investigations” (p. 6). As I type these keys, I realize that three of three chapters told as campfire stories dealt with one of each of my research questions. My first chapter: *Thinking Outside the Bun* answers my first question, *how does what I do as an outdoor educator, shape my educational philosophy?* *The Shock of the Quiet* answers my second question, *what influences drive my actions in the field?* *Wherever You Go There You Are, So Remember Stories are Powerful* answers my third question, *how can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioners’ craft?* Delving deeper, these questions enabled me to identify five faultlines in the field of outdoor education in Ontario, as exposed through my practice.

- a) The centre-based/people-based faultline
- b) The environmental faultline
- c) The commercial/educational faultline
- d) The aesthetic adventure/peak adventure faultline
- e) The universal story/personal story faultline

According to Bone (2005), these areas of tension reflect the potential for political change in the social division of power. To successfully learn how to negotiate these faultlines, outdoor educators need a plan to guide their practice or a personal educational philosophy. By engaging with a plan, outdoor educators and other practitioners (researchers included) engage their practice with creativity and turning a practice into more than routine, turning it into a craft.

Through the stories that I have written, what I have learned about myself as an outdoor educator is that I am in a state of change. During this period of change or growth, I learned that what I used to do as an outdoor educator is not the same as where I wish to go in my career. Just as Donaldson (1950) wrote, by writing these stories I have taken a mental stock of where I am so that I can focus on where I want to be in the future.

Writing Thinking Outside the Bun

For example, writing the story *Thinking Outside the Bun*, allowed me to understand that I value teaching about my immediate environment, rather than simply facilitating activities that can happen in Any Woods (Baker, 2007). This story took the most time to write as it was the first story I attempted to construct. I feel it is important to note that previous drafts included almost all the raw^d data for this story. That was because I was afraid that if I left something out, I might miss some important detail. Later, I learned to chop significant portions from the story to streamline its flow. This allowed me to highlight the monotony of, as Beames (2006) describes, working a 40 hour week running the same teambuilding activities over and over again, that being group initiatives, low ropes, and high ropes. During my experience working in outdoor

education has predominantly been that, and holding a certificate that identified me as a ropes course instructor did not help in the process. What I learned, though, during the spring and summer seasons of 2007 was that I was getting bored with these activities. I decided to take on the role of a mentor to pass on the knowledge I had learned over several seasons of providing such programs. While in this role, I took the time to rediscover my earlier interests in becoming involved in outdoor education: ecology.

What I realized was that I was becoming less interested with high intensity pursuits. I attempted to demonstrate this change in my educational philosophy through the discussion that followed. Through this discussion, I used contrasting sources of literature to demonstrate my feelings I developed in regards to much of the outdoor education literature identified as supporting the field. For myself, during graduate school I quickly came to realize research studies, like that by Hattie et al. (1997), felt hollow to me. Listening to students in my outdoor recreation seminars it seemed as if, like Beames (2003) argues, they were being trained to be able to preach Priest's (1999a, 1999b) ideas of adventure education, but were unable to read the landscape. As an undergraduate myself, I had not been taught the works of authors like Priest, but, instead, my years of study at the University of Waterloo were spent learning how to interpret the landscape so that I could work towards managing it, and people's roles in it. The study of heritage, culture, and ecology had played a significant role in my education as an undergraduate student, but adventure programming seemed more important to the courses I was contributing to in outdoor recreation at Brock.

Realizing this, I did not wish to devalue that type of knowledge, especially because that was what many of my students were interested in. However, I was a person

who had worked in the field of outdoor education and then someone who had entered into graduate school wishing to study outdoor education. The notions of authors, such as Priest (1999a, 1999b) or Hattie et al. (1997), were not the reasons that I got involved in outdoor education, even if I was working on ropes courses. Realizing this, I had myself been caught up in these practices like ropes course programs, that were dictated by the writings of these authors. My sense of tension had been shaded by both the Centre-based/People-based faultline and the Environmental faultline. I was becoming less dependent upon facilities and equipment to direct my teaching outdoors and becoming more interested in teaching people about the environment around them. I decided to change my behaviour. By doing so, like working towards developing a curriculum linked water quality program, I realized I was moving beyond just participating in a practice. As an outdoor educator I was now engaging in a craft.

This is why I decided to include Preston's (2004) narrative as part of my autoethnography. Her work demonstrates a similar path to one I wish to walk myself. Along this path I will teach students how to read the landscape they live in. I will teach them how to learn about the natural components of the world around them, including themselves, and the cultural history that has helped shape the natural characteristics of the regions they reside in. Connecting this to my philosophy of outdoor education I explained at the start of this thesis, I feel that I only came to this conclusion by regularly critiquing my own practice through my reflective journaling. This practice is important because it allows practitioners to understand and reflect on the actions they are performing, so that they can realign if they wish the personal direction of their career. This is why stories are powerful learning tools, as I described in previous chapters.

Stories provide a way for practitioners to learn from each other by sharing our experiences.

Writing the Shock of the Quiet

I felt it was important to share such an unsettling story for myself like *The Shock of the Quiet*. This is a story that took me on an emotional rollercoaster ride during the writing process. It embodies several unsettling issues that have frustrated me in my experiences in Ontario-based outdoor education. For me, the main reason for these feelings are directly connected to the Commercial/Educational faultline, especially when people do not take accountability for their own actions or act as bullies within the workplace. This seems too often to be connected to the pursuit for commercial success over educational success. I argue that if outdoor educators would focus rather on educational success, then (even if they are involved in a commercial market) commercial success would follow. Sadly though, more often than not, practitioners tend to focus only on the commercial aspects of what they call outdoor education leaving the educational aspects of their programs as merely slogans in competition for more clients and the almighty dollar.

As an outdoor educator, I understand that sometimes programs change at the last moment. A teacher might want something different that he had forgotten to ask for. In those situations practitioners, like myself need to stop, think about what the person is asking for, and consider if that is what they are really about? And ask, is this what I really want to provide? What I have learned through this story is that it is important for me to stand up for myself and the type of program I want to provide, especially in this

field because there will be people who will try to push me to get their own way. That could be colleagues, clients, teachers, or even students. What is important is that I stand up to this behaviour in a calm and firm approach. This way I can provide the type of program I want, too.

In a toxic environment, such as the one I describe in my story, I realized that I was no longer an appropriate fit for the place where I was working. I had grown as an outdoor educator in a different direction. What I was interested in promoting was environmental learning through local contexts. This involves negotiating the Aesthetic Adventures/ Peak Adventures faultline. This is because I have become more interested in providing sensuous experiences (aesthetic adventures) that promote connection as part of nature, rather than sensational experiences (peak adventures) surrounded or solely moving through nature. I demonstrate how I negotiated this faultline both in the story and in the discussion that follows, when I discuss how my ideas are no longer in line with the organization I was working for. The best decision I made was to leave once I was finished my contract. As an older professional in the field now, I realize that this move is not the downfall of my career. There will be times when I need to readjust the path on which I wish to proceed. I realize now that I am progressing towards developing my own program that focuses on engaging students in hands-on activities that teach them to learn how to read the environment. This vision includes as a central tenet, developing a program that is meaningful for their education because I feel that if students are participating in a so-called educational program, then it should be connected in some way to the curriculum that students are learning in their schools. That way learning that occurs in the immediate environment is transferable back to their lives at school and in

their communities. This allows them opportunities to use that information in school and in their daily lives outside of school.

Writing Wherever You Go . . .

But to make this vision successful, I must continue to maintain myself as a reflective practitioner. The importance of being a reflective practitioner is what I attempted to demonstrate through my story: *Wherever You Go There You Are, so Remember Stories are Powerful*. For me, reflective practice as a form of practitioner inquiry can be used to assist practitioners, whether they are outdoor educators, scientists, or students to create awareness of their immediate actions and think about how they can improve their craft. In this story I deliberately loaded the first half of Mike's story with ropes course details so that I could demonstrate how reflective practice at first works in a slow fashion to assist practitioners in realizing their educational philosophies. Near the end of the story is when I decided to bring in my ideas regarding the development of curriculum linked programs which focus on teaching students about their local natural environment.

In conjunction with these ideas I included in the discussion this story, the stories of the other authors, specifically Preston and Mike to illuminate: (a) in Preston's case, how reflective practice assisted her in determining what was most important was working as a facilitator to provide a student-centered learning process, and (b) in Mike's case, to discuss how over time and with practice, practitioners can learn to refine their craft and shape it to the way they want it. However, this requires that a practitioner is supported within his working environment with a sense of freedom and individuality in the choices

he makes as he defines his craft.²¹⁰ This is what enables this process. This is where a practitioner may need to negotiate the universal story/personal story faultline because at times it is hard to realize if one is writing their own story or, as I stated earlier, following a movement. If one wants to engage in the craft of their practice, one needs to realize that it is important to be aware of whose story his actions are being guided by.

My Personal Educational Philosophy

Through this autoethnography, I have engaged myself in my own story. I have engaged myself in a deeper form of reflective practice that goes beyond my initial intentions for keeping a reflective journal while I was working on the frontlines of my field. What I have learned is that as an outdoor educator, what I value first are people; not programs, not equipment, not facilities, but people. From my perspective, outdoor education is driven by people. As a practitioner in this field and a member of the Ontario College of Teachers, I am a person well qualified to power my own outdoor education program. Just as Donaldson (1950) writes about the kind of program he wants to run; the kind of program I would like to run in the future is not one isolated to an outdoor education centre. As I have learned through my thesis, this is not the local environment that I wish to position myself in if I wish to be a successful outdoor educator.

As Goodale (1972) argues, “Unless outdoor education and educators throw their energies into creating a habitable urban environment,” outdoor education, “is little more than a sop for the critics” (p. 6). What I now know I need to do is immerse myself within the urban environment, and produce a program that can be implemented in schools and to

²¹⁰ (Sharpe, personal communication, March 6, 2009).

a greater extent for the general urban public, either on school grounds or within close proximity to the schools in a public area such as at abandoned lot, a cemetery, or in parks. As an educator, what I wish to do is teach students and the general public how to read the landscape of their environment, and, through this process show them that they are part of a larger ecosystem and that they play a central role just as other species do in their surroundings. This will assist in helping to create healthier communities. One way I can do this is by encouraging students to develop their own ideas about their local environment by showing how to observe their environment through multiple lenses, like local history, native edible plants, where their food comes from, and cultural issues, which affect and are embedded in their daily lives.

To accomplish this, I will have to continue to keep a reflective journal about my practice so that I may continue my research into my own craft as an outdoor educator. As well continuing on this process will enable me to have a source of credible data so that I can show other practitioners how I plan to, in fact, accomplish my educational goals in the future. This way other outdoor educators and educators in general will be able to understand how one of their own is growing as an outdoor educator in his career.

In conclusion, I wish to demonstrate to scholars in the field of outdoor education and academia at large how reflecting on a person's craft is a valuable and an important endeavor for professionals to engage in. By doing so, professionals can gain a deeper understanding of what they do and how they do it, and, through this process, uncover hidden issues that professionals may wish to change so that they can become better professionals. One way to do this is to engage in a form of professional reflection as I have done here in this thesis, and share stories with other professionals so that they have

stories to compare to their own. As I have argued previously, people are important.

People are the backbone of educational programs and other professions. That is why people are important. Wherever there are people, there are stories to share because that is part of our nature as animals. We share stories, because we know that stories are powerful.

Coda E: Notes from My Thesis Defense

The following information has been provided to summarize the preceding writing as addressed at my thesis defense. It has been included here to illustrate to readers, in point form, the key issues that the following pages addressed.

- What did I discover?
 - Using FCW reflectively to critique critical incidents in my practice, I identified 5 faultlines shaping my craft.
 - Faultlines are areas of ideological tension between groups where there exists the potential for a social shift in power (Bone 2005).
 - The centre-based/people-based faultline
 - The environmental faultline
 - The commercial/educational faultline
 - The aesthetic adventure/peak adventure faultline
 - The universal story/personal story faultline
- Centre-based / People-based Faultline
 - Illustrated first in my historical analysis of newspaper articles
 - described through a fictional academic oral presentation;
 - Campfire Story: *Thinking Outside the Bun*
 - Illustrates the ideological rift between groups that:
 - Value facilities as the driving force of OE programs;
 - programs that focus on equipment intensive high intensity pursuits;

- views centers as the only places urban people can get outdoors.
- Value (field technicians and educators) as the force of OE programs;
 - Programs focused by the expertise and interests of staff
 - members;
 - Can operate anywhere, including in *Wild Cities*;
 - Positions people as part of nature, not separate from it.
- Answers my first research question
 - *How does what I do as an outdoor educator, shape my educational philosophy?*
- Environmental Faultline
 - Illustrated through the campfire story, *Thinking Outside the Bun*
 - The ideological rift between OE programs
 - focus on using nature to teach about the environment;
 - Instead of focusing on high intensity, equipment intensive activities to teach people how to use this equipment to move through or across an environment;
 - In the latter case the environment becomes a backdrop to skill development and vaguely framed program focuses like teamwork and communication..
 - Answers my first research question
 - *How does what I do as an outdoor educator, shape my educational philosophy?*
- What did I learn from these Faultlines?

- I realized I was caught in the monotony of working a forty hour week running the same teambuilding activities (Beames, 2006):
 - group initiatives, low ropes and high ropes
- I value teaching people how to *interpret* their immediate environment, rather than simply facilitating activities that can happen in *Any Woods* (Baker, 2005).
 - Becoming a mentor, I decided to pass on my ropes course knowledge.
- This gave me time to rediscover my earlier interests in OE:
 - Ecology & Nature Study.
- Commerical / Educational Faultline
 - Illustrated through the campfire story, *The Shock of the Quiet*
 - This is the ideological rift between groups that:
 - Focus on commercial success, breeds a community environment of competition = overlooks educational accountability + contributes to staff bullying
 - Outdoor educators who focus on educational success
 - I argue that if groups focus on educational success, commercial success will follow (even if their programs are offered on a commercial basis)
 - Answers second research question
 - *What influences drive my actions in the field?*
 - What did I learn from this faultline?

- When clients (like teachers) want something, practitioners need think about what the client is asking . . .
 - And whether that is what the practitioner is able to provide?
 - I've learned it's important to stand up for myself and the type of program I want to provide, because people seem to appreciate authenticity
- Aesthetic Adventure / Peak Adventure Faultline
 - Illustrated through the campfire story, *The Shock of the Quiet*
 - This is the ideological rift between groups that value OE programs that use sensuous experiences to promote personal connections as a part of nature, and groups that value sensational experiences concerned solely with moving through nature.
 - Answers second research question
 - *What influences drive my actions in the field?*
 - What did I learn from this faultline?
 - As an older professional in the field now, as Bowles (2003) argues, I realize that when my ideas may not fit with the organization I am working with it is a good idea to move on.
 - This move is not the downfall of a practitioner's career and there are times when a practitioner needs to re-adjust his path;
 - I am developing my own program that focuses on engaging students in hands-on activities that teach them how to read the environment.

- Universal Story / Personal Story Faultline
 - Illustrated through the campfire story, *Wherever You Go There You Are, So Remember Stories are Powerful*
 - This is the ideological rift where it is hard to realize if one is writing his own story or following a movement. *If one wants to engage in the craft of his practice, he needs to realize that it's important to be aware of whose story is guiding his actions*
 - Answers third research question
 - *How can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioner's craft?*
 - What did I learn?
 - To ensure my personal educational philosophy is successful, I must continue to maintain myself as a reflective practitioner.
 - It is important to remember that *reflective practice*, at first, *works in a slow fashion to assist a practitioner* in realizing his personal educational philosophy.
 - Reflective practice as a form of practitioner inquiry can be used to assist many practitioners such as outdoor educators, scientists or students: create awareness of a practitioner's immediate actions so he can take action to improve his craft & learn how to negotiate faultlines in his craft;
 - I included in the discussion the stories of authors to illuminate:

- Preston: *how reflective practice assisted her in determining that what was important was working as a facilitator to provide a student centered learning process;*
- Elrick: *to discuss how over time a practitioner can learn to refine his craft and shape it to the way he want;*
- *This requires that a practitioner is supported within his working environment with a sense of freedom and individuality in the choices he makes as he defines his craft* (E. Sharpe, personal communication, March 6, 2009).

- Conclusion

- This study illustrates how reflective practice can:
 - help practitioners evaluate critical incidents in practice;
 - identify faultlines in their craft;
 - construct a personal educational philosophy to negotiate those faultlines.
- What I've learned is that as an outdoor educator, *what I value first are people*. Not programs, not equipment, not facilities, *but people*.
- From my perspective outdoor education is driven by people: as a practitioner in this field and a member of the Ontario College of Teachers I am a person well qualified to power my own outdoor education program.

- Answering Donaldson's (1950) example, the kind of program I would like to run in the future will not be limited to an outdoor education centre.
 - This is not the local environment that I wish to position myself in if I wish to be an authentic outdoor educator.
- As Goodale (1972) argues, "Unless outdoor education and educators throw their energies into creating a habitable urban environment," outdoor education, "is little more than a sop for the critics" (p. 6).
- I now know I need to immerse myself within the urban environment;
 - produce a program that can be implemented in schools and for the urban public;
 - either on school grounds or within close proximity to the schools in a public areas such as abandoned lots, a cemetery, or in parks.

- Future Direction of My Educational Philosophy

- As an educator what I wish to do is teach students and the general public how to read the landscape of their environment;
- Through this process show them that they are part of a larger ecosystem and that they play a central role in it just as other species do in their surroundings;
 - This will assist in helping to create healthier communities.
- This means I will encourage my students to develop their own ideas about their local environment by showing them how to observe it:

- Using multiple lenses:
- local history;
- wild edible plants;
- where their food comes from;
- cultural issues embedded in our daily lives.

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Appendix A

James Analysis 1.0

New question: How does what I do as an outdoor educator, shape my educational philosophy?

Legend: People (ppl), Places (plc), Objects (obj), Events (evt)

Technical

<u>What do I do as an outdoor educator?</u>	<u>As an outdoor educator what is my educational philosophy?</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Ropes course programs (ppl) Ropes course programs (plc) Ropes course programs (obj) Ropes (evt) Initiative programs (ppl) Initiatives (evt)		Running a lot of adventure education programs using rope courses
Establishing relationships (ppl) Group characteristics (ppl) Group characteristics (plc) Dealing with the administration (plc) Facilitating program (obj) Business outside of routine programs (evt) Emergency response (ppl) Communication issues (obj) Orienteering (evt) Camp (evt)		Its important to consider how relationships are constructed in the field
Program maintenance (plc) Program maintenance (obj)		Programs need constant maintenance
Linking program and the environment (plc) Linking program to the environment (obj) Health and weather (plc)	1	The point when my educational philosophy began to shift towards a more radical (<i>root</i>) approach to outdoor education
Lifeguarding (evt)		My role as one of a very few trained lifeguards

Meaning

<u>What do I do as an outdoor educator?</u>	<u>As an outdoor educator what is my educational philosophy?</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Ropes Course Programs (plc) Teachable moment at ropes course (evt) Evolution of campus (plc)	Questioning my craft (ppl)	Questioning my craft
Passing the onus back (ppl) Negotiating negativity (ppl) Gauging group characteristics (ppl) Entertainment (ppl) Ensuring communication (plc) Communication issues (obj) Open communication with staff (evt) Program maintenance (obj)	Observing my influence (ppl) Inclusion of all participants (evt)	Observing my influence
Change in routine (evt)	Learning from my craft (ppl)	Learning from my craft
Health and weather (plc)		
Staff and site (plc)		
Observations of participants using program equipment (obj) Problem solving (obj)		

Political

<u>What do I do as an outdoor educator?</u>	<u>As an outdoor educator what is my educational philosophy?</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
	Role modeling (ppl) Role modeling (plc) Being humble and using a calm voice (obj) Stay calm (evt) Be honest with clients (evt) Learning from my environment (plc) Be prepared (evt) Support program by taking initiative (evt)	Acting in a professional manner
Venting (ppl) Feeling stalled (ppl) Inclusion (ppl)	Taking care of myself (ppl) Noticing learning dis-attached from the environment (plc) Too many lists is a waste of time (obj)	Recognizing the need to take care of myself in a fake community environment that was really a competitive environment
Linking program to natural environment (plc)	Using my environment to enhance learning (plc) Using my environment to enhance learning (obj) Recognize teachable moments (failures) (evt)	Linking program to the natural environment
Insight into group (ppl) (SIDE NOTE: insight about FLY kids)	Learning from my craft (ppl) (SIDE NOTE: insight about myself)	Insight about other and myself

James Analysis 2.0

New question: What influences drive my actions in the field?

Legend: People (ppl), Places (plc), Objects (obj), Events (evt)

Technical

<u>What drives my actions in the field?</u>	<u>What influences me?</u>	<u>New codes for Merged questions</u>
Coaching (ppl) Letting others lead at ropes (ppl) Debriefing (ppl) Teaching kinesthetically (obj) Getting students to think about how to do an activity (obj) Physically showing people what to do at ropes (evt)	Client comfort on ropes (plc)	Acting as a coach or mentor for participants and staff, teaching them how to act in their designated role during individual activities?
Placing onus back on client (ppl) Problem solving (obj) Educating guests that their part of a larger residential community (plc)		Educating participants and clients about being accountable for their actions while they are guest members of YMCA Cedar Glen's residential community
Writing program (obj) Trying to look busy (ppl) <i>(Side Note: To put it bluntly the writing program comments were written on July 5 when I felt I need to spend more time of writing program. By Aug 28 Grubby and myself had all but given up on writing program. In hindsight, we just made ourselves look busy because we had felt placated by the organizations request that we write programs and never given any time to do so.)</i>		Feeling placated about responsibilities I was told I was hired for.
Health and weather (plc) Making program more involving (plc)		Making program more involving
Sensing an emergency (evt) Coming together during an emergency (evt) Feeling alone during a medical emergency (evt)	Professional affiliations (Lifeguarding) (ppl)	Illustrating the benefits of having staff qualified in emergency response training (NLS)
	Influenced by academic writing (obj)	Influenced by academic writing

Meaning

<u>What drives my actions in the field?</u>	<u>What influences me?</u>	<u>New codes for Merged questions</u>
Frustration (ppl) Standing up for personal rights at work (plc) Bullying (obj) Bullying (evt)	Bullying and frustration (ppl) Bullying (plc) Frustration with staff (plc) Bullying and Frustration (obj) Bullying (evt) Lack of support (evt)	How bullying leads to unnecessary frustrations at work
Communication is key of programming (ppl) Communication (obj) Communication (evt)	Communication issues (ppl)	Communication is the key to maintaining a smooth running program
Connecting with clients at a human level (evt) Group Characteristics (ppl) Teaching people to be aware of their local community (plc)	Community (evt) Dealing with kids (ppl)	Connecting with clients at a human level
Model preferred behaviour (evt) Letting others lead (ppl) Letting others lead (obj)	Being professional (evt) Support (ppl) Supporting others needs (obj) Sharing program ideas (ppl)	Being professional
Health and weather (plc)	Health and weather (plc) Health and weather (obj)	Health and weather
Teaching ownership of own actions (obj) Teachable moments (evt)		Teachable moments
	Teaching influences (obj) Influenced by academic writing (evt) <i>(Side Note: Influences from academia)</i>	Influences from academia

Political

<u>What drives my actions in the field?</u>	<u>What influences me?</u>	<u>New codes for Merged questions</u>
Frustrated (ppl) Bullying (evt) Pointing out my own flaws at ropes <i>(the reason why I needed to learn to let others lead)</i> (obj) <i>(Side Note: Really did I need to do this or did the staff just not step up to the plate and then used the administrator as bullying leverage?)</i>	Shrinking the value of the YMCA's six core values (ppl) Shrinking the value of the YMCA's six core values (obj) Frustration and bullying (ppl) Bullying and frustration (ppl) Bullying and frustration (evt) Closed communication (evt) Health and weather (plc)	When staff ignored following the core values of the YMCA, bullying became the result <i>(too many people wanting to be chief and no soldiers)</i>
Planning to model leadership (ppl) Creativity (ppl) Being real about rules and routines (plc) Adapting ropes to accommodate participant needs (obj) Letting others lead (evt) <i>(Side Note: Putting younger staff in a leadership position through deception by running off to bathroom because they wouldn't step up on their own)</i> Using deception to teach a lesson (evt)	Am I seen as a leader? (ppl) Learning from others (ppl) Mentoring (plc) Influenced by academic writing (ppl)	Am I seen as a leader?
Thinking about group dynamics (plc)	Noticing gaps in student learning (evt)	Noticing gaps in learning
Image work (plc) Changing my discourse (ppl)	Being professional (evt) Open communication (obj)	Image work

James Analysis 2.0

New question: How can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioners' craft?

Notes:

- When writing up this section illustrate how reflective practice has provided me insight into how I feel I can improve my craft. Then discuss how conducting research on such practices has provided deeper insight into how this process can be used to educate practitioners about their current craft and how he/she may wish to change or progress in the future.

Legend: People (ppl), Places (plc), Objects (obj), Events (evt)

Technical

<u>How can I improve my craft?</u>	<u>How can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioners' understanding of their craft?</u>	<u>New codes</u>
	Writing clarifies issues of critical incidence (plc)	Reflective writing helps clarify issues of critical incidence
	Helps me recognize when I need time for myself away from work (plc) Helps me recognize when I need time for myself away from work (obj)	

Meaning

<u>How can I improve my craft?</u>	<u>How can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioners' understanding of their craft?</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Recognize redundant patterns and change them (evt)	Reflect on my actions in the field and plan for future actions in the field (ppl)	Recognize redundant patterns, reflect on these patterns and think of ways to positively change them
	Reflect on how the actions of others are causing problems (incidents of bullying) (evt)	

Political

<u>How can I improve my craft?</u>	<u>How can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioners' understanding of their craft?</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
<p>Educate other people about what my responsibilities are as an outdoor educator (ppl)</p> <p>Look for opportunities to make programs a success (ppl)</p> <p>Know your wants, but recognize and use the immediate resources in your environment wisely (obj)</p> <p>Keep your work creative (evt)</p> <p>Role model initiative (plc)</p> <p>Recognize redundant patterns (plc)</p> <p>Recognizing redundant patterns and change them (evt)</p> <p>Cater your instructions for running programs to a diversity of learning styles (obj)</p> <p>Take responsibility as part of a team for inconveniences and learn from them (obj)</p> <p>Take time away from work (obj)</p>	<p>Writing clarifies issues of critical incident (ppl)</p>	<p>Reflective writing helps clarify issues of critical incidence</p>

Appendix B

Beames & Preston Comparison 2.0

New question: How does what I do as an outdoor educator, shape my educational philosophy?

Legend: People (ppl), Places (plc), Objects (obj), Events (evt)

Technical

<u>What do I do as an outdoor educator?</u>		<u>As an outdoor educator, what is my educational philosophy?</u>		<u>New Codes</u>
Beames	Preston	Beames	Preston	
Standing on my soapbox (obj)	Drawbacks of generalist or universalist programs (obj)			Influence of the algorithmic paradigm
	Learning about a natural place more intimately (plc) Educator knowing place of study (plc)		Program focus: The concept of a journey (obj)	Educational philosophy for outdoor education interpretive course
	Teaching students to read the landscape (plc) Teaching students to experiment in unraveling the stories of a place (obj) Teaching students how to read how people act when associating labels to a place (evt)			Teaching students the craft of reading a landscape
	Teaching students to take charge of their learning (<i>life long learning</i>) (plc) Allowing students to read their own story of a place (evt) Reflecting on a different lens of a place (evt)			Student centered learning
		Importance of educating funders about research designs (ppl)		Importance of educating outsiders (funders) about research designs

Meaning

<u>What do I do as an outdoor educator?</u>		<u>As an outdoor educator, what is my educational philosophy?</u>		<u>New Codes</u>
Beames	Preston	Beames	Preston	
<p>Standing on my soapbox (humility) (ppl)</p> <p>Standing on my soapbox (place as a moment in time) (plc)</p>	<p>Why are bushwalks usually pre-occupied with traveling from point A to B? (evt)</p>	<p>Qualified staff is important for effective outdoor education programs (evt)</p> <p>An outdoor educational journey can take place in one's immediate surroundings (plc)</p>	<p>Program focus: Connecting to a particular place (obj)</p> <p>Teaching people to read the natural environment through multiple lenses (plc)</p>	<p>Shifting away from the influence of the algorithmic paradigm</p>
	<p>Teaching students how to access the more intimate details of a place (obj)</p> <p>Illustrating the multiple lenses of a place (plc)</p> <p>Teaching students to read how people act when associating labels to a place (obj)</p>			<p>Teaching students the craft of reading a landscape</p>
	<p>Allowing students to read their own story of a place (evt)</p> <p>Sharing stories with students about the land (evt)</p> <p>Student reflections about learning to read the story of a place (plc)</p> <p>Teaching students to experiment in unraveling the stories of a place (plc)</p>		1	<p>There's value in sharing stories about a place</p>

Political

<u>What do I do as an outdoor educator?</u>		<u>As an outdoor educator, what is my educational philosophy?</u>		<u>New Codes</u>
Beames	Preston	Beames	Preston	
	<p>Drawbacks of generalist or universalist programs (obj)</p> <p>Reading the landscape challenges dominant ideologies about a place or culture (obj)</p>	<p>Moving past predetermined outcomes (ppl)</p> <p>Need to move beyond adrenaline-based outdoor education programs (evt)</p> <p>Outdoor education should be grounded in the multiple lenses of a place (plc)</p> <p>Importance of learning how to be an outdoor educator by facilitating outdoor education experiences (ppl)</p>	<p>Teaching people connections to the environment, not disconnections (plc)</p> <p>Program focus: Developing a sense of humans being part of an ecological community (obj)</p>	<p>Shifting away from the influence of the algorithmic paradigm</p>
		<p>Importance of educating funders about research designed (ppl)</p> <p>Educating funders (evt)</p>		<p>Importance of educating outsiders (funders) about research designs</p>

Beames & Preston Comparison 2.1

New question: What influences drive my actions in the field?

Legend: People (ppl), Places (plc), Objects (obj), Events (evt)

Technical

<u>What drives my actions in the field?</u>		<u>What influences me?</u>		<u>New Codes</u>
Beames	Preston	Beames	Preston	
Adventures-in-a-bun pay the bills (ppl)		Influences of academic literature (plc)	Writing that discusses the hyper-separation of Western culture from the environment (plc)	Influences of academic literature
Questioning the qualifications of his craft (wilderness-based programs) (plc)				Questioning the qualifications of his craft

Meaning

What drives my actions in the field?		What influences me?		New Codes
Beames	Preston	Beames	Preston	
Standing on my soapbox (ppl)	Drawbacks of generalist or universal programs (ppl)	<p>The influence of the algorithmic paradigm (ppl)</p> <p>The influence of the algorithmic paradigm (obj)</p> <p>Reading academic writing as gospel (obj)</p>		<p>The influence of the algorithmic paradigm (<i>the influence of the universal packaged program</i>)</p>
Questioning his craft (ppl)	<p>Working with others helps when developing an educational philosophy for a program (ppl)</p> <p>Teaching students how to access the more intimate details of a place (ppl)</p> <p>Stepping back to let students develop their own understandings about the stories of a place (ppl)</p>	<p>Questioning his craft through reading new critical academic writing (obj)</p> <p>Theorists challenge the commodified (evt)</p> <p>The public craves the commodified (evt)</p> <p>Little time to influence funders about new academic positions (ppl)</p> <p>The losers of commodified outdoor education (evt)</p>		<p>Moving beyond commodified outdoor education programs (<i>adventures-in-a-bun</i>) requires developing an educational philosophy for the program</p>

Political

<u>What drives my actions in the field?</u>		<u>What influences me?</u>		<u>New Codes</u>
Beames	Preston	Beames	Preston	
		<p>Influences of academic literature (ppl)</p> <p>Influence of critical academic literature (plc)</p> <p>Little time to educate funders (ppl)</p>	<p>Writing that discusses the hyper-separation of Western culture from the environment (ppl)</p>	<p>How the influence of critical academic literature is calling for shift in outdoor education</p>
	<p>Why we were wary of adrenaline filled activities (ppl)</p>	<p>Questioning his craft (ppl)</p> <p>Questioning his craft through reading new critical academic writing (obj)</p>	<p>Student interest in learning to read the landscape of a place (ppl)</p>	<p>How questioning one's craft can create a shift towards more genuine learning experiences</p>

Beames & Preston Comparison 2.2

New question: How can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioners' craft?

Legend: People (ppl), Places (plc), Objects (obj), Events (evt)

Technical

<u>How can I improve my craft?</u>		<u>How can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioners' understanding of their craft?</u>		<u>New Codes</u>
Beames	Preston	Beames	Preston	
<p>Reflect on one's professional purpose (ppl)</p> <p>Practitioner-based writing illuminates usefulness of complex theories developed by academics (obj)</p>	<p>Create learning environments that aim for student-centered learning (evt)</p>		<p>Engaging in a critique of practice (obj)</p> <p>Deepen the understanding of pedagogical issues related to facilitating educational experiences (obj)</p> <p>Show an educational avenue for further study by practitioner-researchers (obj)</p>	<p>Reflecting on practice deepens a practitioners' understanding of their craft and illustrates further questions to research regarding their craft</p>
	<p>Reflecting on student evaluations of the course (obj)</p> <p>Reflecting on the program through evaluation of the experiences expressed in the student journals (obj)</p>		1	<p>Importance of using multiple lenses to evaluate program effectiveness</p>

Meaning

<u>How can I improve my craft?</u>		<u>How can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioners' understanding of their craft?</u>		<u>New Codes</u>
Beames	Preston	Beames	Preston	
	<p>Reflecting on student feedback (evt)</p> <p>Reading critical academic literature or literature that challenges the dominant ideology of the field (evt)</p>	<p>Reflect on questions about an educator's craft (evt)</p> <p>Reflect on questions about an educators craft (ppl)</p>	<p>Explore the problematic issues of a previous educational course/lesson (evt)</p> <p>Show an educational avenue for further study by practitioner-researchers (ppl)</p> <p>Deepen the understanding of pedagogical issues related to facilitating educational experiences (evt)</p>	<p>Reflecting on practice deepens a practitioners' understanding of their craft and illustrates further questions to research regarding their craft</p>
	<p>Teaching students transferable skills for reading a local landscape (linking local with the universal) (evt)</p>		<p>Illustrate how an educator's practice shows educational outcomes (ppl)</p>	<p>Emergence of exploring a deeper pedagogical issue illustrates how practitioners' develop a craft (<i>how teaching students to interpret local landscapes provided the students with a practical skill set or craft</i>)</p>

Political

<u>How can I improve my craft?</u>		<u>How can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioners' understanding of their craft?</u>		<u>New Codes</u>
Beames	Preston	Beames	Preston	
		<p>Reflect on questions about an educator's craft (evt)</p> <p>Write a vision statement for an educator's future implementation of his craft (ppl)</p>	<p>Reflect on prior learning content (evt)</p> <p>Help educators reflect and frame their argument on the current state of educational practice (ppl)</p>	<p>Asking questions about a practitioner's personal craft provides an outlet to start developing a practitioner's educational philosophy</p>
	Formal and informal feedback from students (evt)		<p>Illustrate how an educator's practice shows educational outcomes (ppl)</p>	<p>It is important to seek evaluation from others (students) regarding the effective implementation of a practitioner's educational philosophy to ensure the vision is inline with the practitioner's actions</p>

Appendix C

James, Beames & Preston Comparison

Question: How does what I do as an outdoor educator, shape my educational philosophy?

<u>Level</u>	<u>James</u>	<u>Beames & Preston</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Technical	Running a lot of adventure education programs using ropes courses	Influence of the algorithmic paradigm Importance of educating outsiders (funders) about research designs	How the influence of the algorithmic paradigm in adventure education is limiting the potential of outdoor education
	Its important to consider how relationships are constructed in the field My role as one of a very few trained lifeguards	Educational philosophy for outdoor education interpretive course Teaching students the craft of reading a landscape	How an educational philosophy can free outdoor educators from being stereotyped into specific roles based on their certifications
	Programs need constant maintenance		Programs need constant maintenance
	The point when my educational philosophy began to shift towards a more radical (<i>root</i>) approach to outdoor education	Student centered learning 1	Student centered outdoor education is situated in the roots of outdoor education

<u>Level</u>	<u>James</u>	<u>Beames & Preston</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Meaning	Questioning my craft	Shifting away from the influence of the algorithmic paradigm	What happened when I began to question my craft (<i>The tipping point to a shift in my</i>

			<i>educational philosophy)</i>
	Observing my influence	Teaching students the craft of reading a landscape	Its important to have the skills to read a person's landscape
	Learning from my craft	There's value in sharing stories about a place	Sharing stories is an important way to learn about a practitioners' (<i>outdoor educator's</i>) craft

<u>Level</u>	<u>James</u>	<u>Beames & Preston</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Political	Acting in an professional manner		My vision of professionalism in outdoor education
	Recognizing the need to take in a fake community environment that is really a competitive environment	Shifting away from the influence of the algorithmic paradigm Importance of educating outsiders (funders) about research designs	Realizing the need to educate people about the need for community-focused environments, instead of competitive ones

James, Beames & Preston Comparison 2.0

Question: What influences drive my actions in the field?

<u>Level</u>	<u>James</u>	<u>Beames & Preston</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Technical	<p>Acting as a coach or mentor for participants and staff, teaching them how to act in their designated role during individual activities</p> <p>Making program more involving</p> <p>Educating participants and clients about being accountable for their actions while they are guest members of YMCA Cedar Glen's residential community</p>		<p>Role modeling how to act as a community member, instead of a community competitor</p>
	<p>Feeling placated about responsibilities I was told I was hired for</p> <p>Illustrating the benefits of having staff qualified in emergency response training (NLS)</p>	<p>Questioning the qualifications of his craft</p>	<p>Do embracing radical (root) ideas mean that I am devaluing the specialized qualifications I have acquired?</p> <p>No those qualifications are still valuable!</p>
	Influenced by academic writing	Influences of academic literature 1	Influences of academic literature

<u>Level</u>	<u>James</u>	<u>Beames & Preston</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Meaning	<p>How bullying leads to unnecessary frustrations at work</p> <p>Being professional</p>	<p>The influence of the algorithmic paradigm (<i>The influence of the universal packaged program</i>)</p>	

	<p>Communication is the key to maintaining a smooth running program</p> <p>Health and weather</p>		
	<p>Connecting with clients at a human level</p> <p>Teachable moments</p> <p>Influences from academia</p>	<p>Moving beyond commodified outdoor education programs (<i>adventures-in-a-bun</i>) requires developing an educational philosophy for the program</p>	<p>Recognizing how having an educational philosophy, allows outdoor educator's to connect with clients at a human level</p>

<u>Level</u>	<u>James</u>	<u>Beames & Preston</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Political	<p>Noticing gaps in learning</p> <p>When staff ignored the follow core values of the YMCA, bullying became the result (<i>Too many people wanting to be chief and no soldiers</i>)</p> <p>Image work</p>	<p>How the influence of critical academic literature is calling for shift in outdoor education</p>	<p>Learning gaps are being exposed in the current dominant perception of how outdoor education programs are supposed to be delivered and critical academic writing is calling for a shift towards a more radical (<i>root</i>) approach</p>
	<p>Am I seen as a leader?</p>	<p>How questioning one's craft can create a shift towards more genuine learning experiences</p>	<p>How is my leadership creating more genuine learning experiences for my colleagues and participants?</p>

James, Beames & Preston Comparison 3.0

Question: How can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioners' craft?

<u>Level</u>	<u>James</u>	<u>Beames & Preston</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Technical	Reflective writing helps clarify issues of critical incidence	Reflecting on practice deepens a practitioners' understanding of their craft and illustrates further questions to research regarding their craft Importance of using multiple lenses to evaluate program effectiveness	Reflective writing as a form of research helps practitioners' understand and evaluate their sophistication of craftsmanship

<u>Level</u>	<u>James</u>	<u>Beames & Preston</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Meaning	Recognize redundant patterns, reflect on these patterns and think of ways to positively change them	Reflecting on practice deepens a practitioners' understanding of their craft and illustrates further questions to research regarding their craft Emergence of exploring a pedagogical issue illustrates how practitioners develop a craft (<i>How teaching students to interpret local landscapes provided the students with a practical skill set</i>)	Its important to be able to read the landscape of a practitioners' craft, so that practitioners can develop questions regarding their craft and think of ways to improve upon their craft (<i>Side Note: This may mean returning to the root of their craft or devolving their craft</i>)

		or craft)	
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<u>Level</u>	<u>James</u>	<u>Beames & Preston</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Political	Reflective writing helps clarify issues of critical incidence	Asking questions about a practitioners' personal craft provides an outlet to start developing a practitioners' educational philosophy	Reflective writing helps clarify issues of critical incidence and assist practitioners' in developing an personal educational philosophy
		It is important to seek evaluation from others (<i>students</i>) regarding the implementation of a practitioners' educational philosophy to ensure the vision is inline with the practitioners' actions	It is important to seek evaluation from others (<i>students</i>) regarding the implementation of a practitioners' educational philosophy to ensure the vision is inline with the practitioners' actions

Appendix D

Elrick Analysis 1.0

New question: How does what I do as an outdoor educator, shape my educational philosophy?

Legend: People (ppl), Places (plc), Objects (obj), Events (evt)

Technical

<u>What do I do as an outdoor educator</u>	<u>As an outdoor educator, what is my educational philosophy?</u>	<u>New codes</u>
Knowing what I do as an outdoor educator (ppl) Knowing my responsibilities as an outdoor educator (ppl)		Knowing what I do as an outdoor educator
Learning that occurs outside a typical school (plc) Learning with a strong focus on community (plc) The learning package (obj) Learning from stories about other people (obj) Reflect on their relationship with the environment (obj) Regular routine (evt) Special events that connect the story of their educational journey with other people's stories (evt)		A learning program that emphasizes that students reflecting on their relationship with the environment <i>(Learning that shows how the natural and cultural environment are one integrated unit)</i>
Involving the reader in the author's own personal story (evt)		The author sharing a personal story with his audience

Meaning

<u>What do I do as an outdoor educator</u>	<u>As an outdoor educator, what is my educational philosophy?</u>	<u>New codes</u>
	Traveling upstream as a metaphor illustrating the importance of considering the source of ideas (ppl)	Traveling upstream as a metaphor illustrating the importance of considering the source of ideas

Political

<u>What do I do as an outdoor educator</u>	<u>As an outdoor educator, what is my educational philosophy?</u>	<u>New codes</u>
	Traveling upstream as a metaphor illustrating the importance of considering the source of ideas (ppl)	An educational philosophy that emphasizes that student's learn how to learn how to explore and participate in issues in their immediate community and then take those skills and use them back in their school community <i>(Creating community leaders)</i>
	Program philosophy supports connecting the idea to the participants life outside the program (ppl)	
	Traveling downstream as a metaphor for illustrating how students return to the regular school curriculum with what they learned from their outdoor education program (evt)	

Elrick Analysis 2.0

New question: What influences drive my actions in the field?

Legend: People (ppl), Places (plc), Objects (obj), Events (evt)

Technical

<u>What drives my actions in the field?</u>	<u>What influences me?</u>	<u>New codes for Merged questions</u>
	Sharing stories about a personal connection to a place (plc)	Personal stories are linked through deep connections to a person's ecological niche
	Returning to my home just happened (evt)	

Meaning

<u>What drives my actions in the field?</u>	<u>What influences me?</u>	<u>New codes for Merged questions</u>
	Teaching and living are interconnected (ppl) Sharing a sense of place (plc) Sharing stories about a personal connection to a place (plc) High intensity outdoor sports pursued on a recreational basis create connections to the environment (evt)	Sharing stories expressing a sense of connection to a place
Connecting learning to a student's community (evt) Creating role models (ppl) Providing opportunities for students to teach the lessons they had learned (ppl)	Awakening ones connection to the natural world (plc) Meeting the community at a level beyond what is typically possible (evt) Integrated curriculum unit taught in the local community (evt)	Teaching students their connection as part of a ecological and cultural community

Political

<u>What drives my actions in the field?</u>	<u>What influences me?</u>	<u>New codes for Merged questions</u>
Rationale for why students will need to learn to connect their school knowledge to their own community (evt)	Importance of linking program to the environment (ppl)	Linking the environment to adventure emphasizes a sense of community
	Its not necessary to do extreme sports to experience the beauty of the natural world (ppl)	Its not necessary to do extreme sports to experience the beauty of the natural world

Elrick Analysis 3.0

New question: How can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioners' craft?

Legend: People (ppl), Places (plc), Objects (obj), Events (evt)

Technical

<u>How can I improve my craft?</u>	<u>How can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioners' understanding of their craft?</u>	<u>New codes</u>
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Meaning

<u>How can I improve my craft?</u>	<u>How can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioners' understanding of their craft?</u>	<u>New codes</u>
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Political

<u>How can I improve my craft?</u>	<u>How can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioners' understanding of their craft?</u>	<u>New codes</u>
Focus on teaching students that they are a part of nature (ppl) Teaching students that they are a part of nature (friluftsliv) (evt)	Allows educators to realize what they teach (ppl)	Allows outdoor educators to realize that what they should be focusing on teaching to students and colleagues is that human beings are a part of nature

Appendix E

James, Beames & Preston to Elrick Comparison1.0

Question: How does what I do as an outdoor educator, shape my educational philosophy?

<u>Level</u>	<u>James, Beames & Preston</u>	<u>Elrick</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Technical	How the influence of the algorithmic paradigm in adventure education is limiting the potential of outdoor education		How the influence of the algorithmic paradigm in adventure education is limiting the potential of outdoor education
	How an educational philosophy can free outdoor educators from being stereotyped into specific roles based on their certifications Student centered outdoor education is situated in the roots of outdoor education	Knowing what I do as an outdoor educator A learning program that emphasizes that students reflecting on their relationship with the environment (<i>Learning that shows how the natural and cultural environment are one integrated unit</i>)	Its important to understand how my educational philosophy is linked to the roots of outdoor education, so that I have a clear understanding of what I do as an outdoor educator
	Programs need constant maintenance		Programs need constant maintenance
		The author sharing a personal story with his audience	The author sharing a personal story with his audience

<u>Level</u>	<u>James, Beames & Preston</u>	<u>Elrick</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Meaning	What happened when I began to question my craft (<i>The tipping point to a shift in my educational philosophy</i>) Its important to have the skills to read a person's landscape	Traveling upstream as a metaphor illustrating the importance of considering the source of ideas	Its important to have the skills to read the stories of a practitioners' landscape, so that practitioners' can begin to question the source of those ideas that influence his craft

	Sharing stories is an important way to learn about a practitioners' <i>(outdoor educator's)</i> craft		
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<u>Level</u>	<u>James, Beames & Preston</u>	<u>Elrick</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Political	<p>My vision of professionalism in outdoor education</p> <p>Realizing the need to educate people about the need for community-focused environments, instead of competitive ones</p>	<p>An educational philosophy that emphasizes that student's learn how to learn how to explore and participate in issues in their immediate community and then take those skills and use them back in their school community <i>(Creating community leaders)</i></p>	<p>Why outdoor education should be focused on developing a sense of community, instead of a sense of competition <i>(Creating genuine leaders)</i></p>

James, Beames & Preston to Elrick Comparision 2.0

Question: What influences drive my actions in the field?

<u>Level</u>	<u>James, Beames & Preston</u>	<u>Elrick</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Technical	Role modeling how to act as a community member, instead of a community competitor	Personal stories are linked through deep connections to a person's ecological niche	Personal stories illustrating deep connections to a person's ecological niche illustrate a sense of community (<i>place</i>)
	Do embracing radical (root) ideas mean that I am devaluing the specialized qualifications I have acquired? No those qualifications are still valuable! Influences of academic literature		Embracing the root ideas of outdoor education links the philosophical roots of outdoor education to a practitioners' current practice

<u>Level</u>	<u>James, Beames & Preston</u>	<u>Elrick</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Meaning	Placing value on communication after realizing that the algorithmic paradigm restricts communication	Sharing stories expressing a sense of connection to a place	How communicating stories about a practitioners' craft community enhances a practitioners' understanding of their craft for the community they serve (<i>ecological and cultural</i>)
	Recognizing how having an educational philosophy, allows outdoor educator's to connect with clients at a human level	Teaching students their connection as part of a ecological and cultural community	

<u>Level</u>	<u>James, Beames & Preston</u>	<u>Elrick</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Political	Learning gaps are being exposed in the current dominant perception of how outdoor education programs are supposed to be delivered and critical	Linking the environment to adventure emphasizes a sense of community	It is important to consider how the roots of outdoor education link outdoor environmental experiences and a personal local environment together to

	academic writing is calling for a shift towards a more radical (<i>root</i>) approach		emphasize a sense of community (<i>ecological and cultural</i>)
	How is my leadership creating more genuine learning experiences for my colleagues and participants?	Its not necessary to do extreme sports to experience the beauty of the natural world	High intensity pursuits are not necessary to create genuine learning experience for my colleagues and participants

James, Beames & Preston to Elrick Comparison 3.0

Question: How can reflective practice as a form of research improve a practitioners' craft?

<u>Level</u>	<u>James, Beames & Preston</u>	<u>Elrick</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Technical	Reflective writing as a form of research helps practitioners' understand and evaluate their sophistication of craftsmanship		Reflective writing as a form of research helps practitioners' understand and evaluate their sophistication of craftsmanship

<u>Level</u>	<u>James, Beames & Preston</u>	<u>Elrick</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Meaning	<p>Its important to be able to read the landscape of a practitioners' craft, so that practitioners can develop questions regarding their craft and think of ways to improve upon their craft</p> <p><i>(Side Note: This may mean returning to the root of their craft or devolving their craft)</i></p>		<p>Its important to be able to read the landscape of a practitioners' craft, so that practitioners can develop questions regarding their craft and think of ways to improve upon their craft</p> <p><i>(Side Note: This may mean returning to the root of their craft or devolving their craft)</i></p>

<u>Level</u>	<u>James, Beames & Preston</u>	<u>Erick</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Political	Reflective writing helps clarify issues of critical incidence and assist practitioners' in developing an personal educational philosophy	Allows outdoor educators to realize that what they should be focussing on teaching to students and colleagues is that human beings are a part of nature	Reflective writing helps practitioners' clarify how they handled issues of critical incidence so that they can evaluate with others how their educational philosophy, actions are in line with their craft communities educational philosophy
	It is important to seek evaluation from others (<i>students</i>) regarding the implementation of a practitioners' educational philosophy to ensure the vision is inline with the practitioners' actions		

Appendix F

Themes for Campfire StoriesLegend for Research Questions: Philosophy (phl), Influences (inf), Reflective (ref)

<u>Level</u>	<u>Final Codes from Cross-Case Analysis</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Technical	Reflective writing as a form of research helps practitioners' understand and evaluate their sophistication of craftsmanship (ref)	Wherever you go there you are, so remember stories are powerful
	How the influence of the algorithmic paradigm in adventure education is limiting the potential of outdoor education (phl)	Thinking outside the bun
	Its important to understand how my educational philosophy is linked to the roots of outdoor education, so that I have a clear understanding of what I do as an outdoor educator (phl)	The shock of the quiet
	Programs need constant maintenance (phl)	Thinking outside the bun
	The author sharing a personal story with his audience (phl)	Wherever you go there you are, so remember stories are powerful
	Personal stories illustrating deep connections to a person's ecological niche illustrate a sense of community (place) (inf)	Wherever you go there you are, so remember stories are powerful 1
	Embracing the root ideas of outdoor education links the philosophical roots of outdoor education to a practitioners' current practice (inf)	The shock of the quiet

<u>Level</u>	<u>Final Codes from Cross-Case Analysis</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Meaning	How communicating stories about a practitioners' craft community enhances a practitioners' understanding of their craft for the community they serve (<i>ecological and cultural</i>) (ref)	Wherever you go there you are, so remember stories are powerful
		The shock of the quiet
	Its important to have the skills to read the stories of a practitioners' landscape, so that practitioners' can begin to question the source of those ideas that influence his craft (phl)	Thinking outside the bun
		Shock of the quiet
	Its important to be able to read the landscape of a practitioners' craft, so that practitioners can develop questions regarding their craft and think of ways to improve upon their craft (<i>Side Note: This may mean returning to the root of their craft or devolving their craft</i>) (ref)	Wherever you go there you are, so remember stories are powerful

<u>Level</u>	<u>Final Codes from Cross-Case Analysis</u>	<u>New Codes</u>
Political	It is important to consider how the roots of outdoor education link outdoor environmental experiences and a person's local environment together to emphasize a sense of community (<i>ecological and cultural</i>) (inf)	The shock of the quiet
	High intensity pursuits are not necessary to create genuine learning experience for my colleagues and participants (inf)	Thinking outside the bun
	Why outdoor education should be focused on developing a sense of community, instead of a sense of competition (<i>Creating genuine leaders</i>) (phl)	The shock of the quiet
		Wherever you go there you are, so remember stories are powerful
	Reflective writing helps practitioners' clarify how they handled issues of critical incidence so that they can evaluate with others how their educational philosophy, actions are in line with their craft communities educational philosophy (ref)	Wherever you go there you are , so remember stories are powerful